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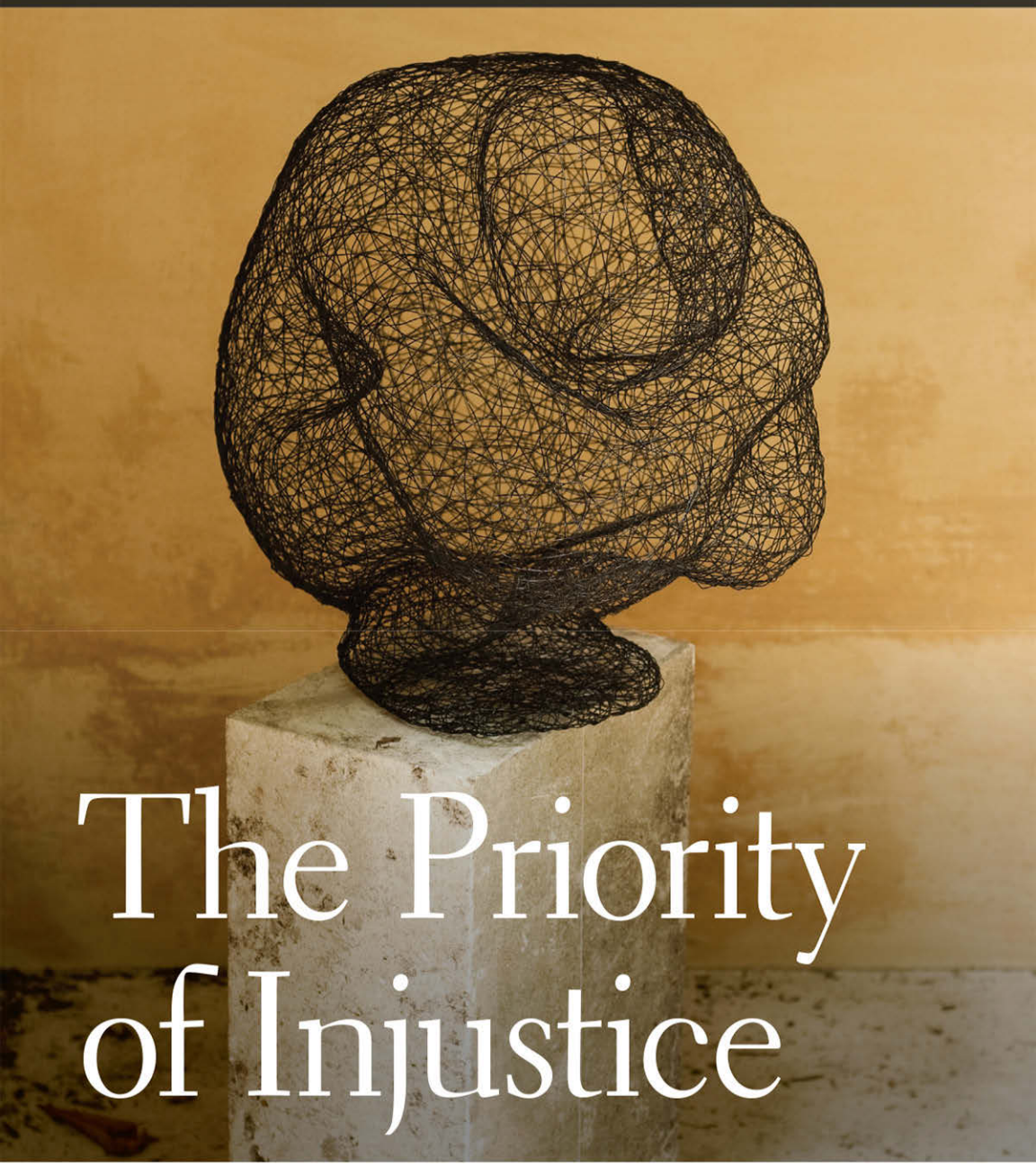

The Priority of Injustice

LOCATING DEMOCRACY IN CRITICAL THEORY

CLIVE BARNETT

VISIT…

The Priority of Injustice

GEOGRAPHIES OF JUSTICE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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CLIVE BARNETT

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For Ruby & Cora

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The manifestation of the wind of thought is not knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And this, at the rare moments when the stakes are on the table, may indeed prevent catastrophes, at least for the self.

—Hannah Arendt

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I think of this as a book written by a jobbing social scientist, informed as it is by my own experience of working on empirically led research projects investigating topics such as media and political mobilization, market practices and public life, urban politics and policy—projects where the meaning of democracy has often been a background presence. Writing this book has often been a rather solitary experience. It has been a project all of my own, undertaken in the interstices of an overlapping succession of research and teaching commitments that have been collaborative in different ways. I have learned a great deal about the issues addressed in this book, and much more still about the challenges of writing itself, from my more or less occasional cowriters and coeditors: Gary Bridge, Murray Low, and Di Scott, Allan Cochrane and Scott Rogers, Nick Mahony and Janet Newman, Nigel Clark and Mustafa Dikeç, Abbey Halcli and Colin Marx, Nick Clarke, Paul Cloke, and Alice Malpass. Much of how I think about the meanings and expectations associated with democracy has been shaped while trying to do research work in and on South Africa over two decades, not least in conversations with Richard Ballard, Debby Bonnin, Bri Maharaj, Jenny Robinson, and Thokazani Xaba, while trying to make sense of "democracy in Durban." Most of the intellectual legwork for this book was done during the decade when I worked for the Open University, and to all of those alongside whom I worked while there I owe an enormous debt for lessons learned about the responsibilities of democratic education. The arguments and understandings I present in this book have also been informed by more or less fleeting, more or less sustained conversations with various people, from each of whom I have learned more than any of them might realize: John Allen, Akin Akinwumi, Cheeku Bhasin, Felicity Callard, John Clarke, Derek Gregory, Hannah Hilbrandt, Kurt Iveson, Kuba Jablonowski, Craig Jeffrey, Dave Land, Eric Laurier, Ruth Leys, Doreen Massey, Lucila Newell, Sue Parnell, Kellie Payne, Mark Purcell, Jessica Pykett, Jon Pugh, Michael Samers, Mike Saward, Christi Smith, Andy Schaap, Sophie Oldfield, Erik Swyngedouw, and Jane Wills have all at some

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The Priority of Injustice

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INTRODUCTION

Arguing with Theory

What is theory good for? Theories are things we argue with. They provide the resources for making validity claims, for drawing inferences, and for constructing generalizations. Arguing with the help of theory is a means of engaging in reasoned debate. And theories are things we use to score points in the midst of an argument. But theories are also things we argue with in another sense, insofar as argument entails passionate, sometimes unreasonable disagreement. Theories can make us angry and invite criticism, if not outright dismissal, because they unsettle our most cherished thoughts. In the social sciences and humanities, arguments about theory are often undertaken as if the choice of an approach is expressive of a whole way of life.[1]

This book is a working through of my own attachments to particular traditions of thought, with a view to how those traditions enact distinctive forms of democratic ethos. My aim is not to propose a theory of democracy, much less a theory of political action. Action does not require a theoretical foundation, after all. The premise of this book is that theory matters not because it guides our actions but because it helps to direct our curiosity to issues that deserve further attention. In this spirit, my discussion of various theories of democracy and the work of various political thinkers—arguing with them and against them—is animated by my desire to understand how best to pursue inquiry into the emergence, sustenance, and extension of democratic politics. I take it for granted that theories are never freestanding discourses, even when they look like they are. Theories are always theories *of* something, always about *something other than themselves*. But as I will argue, theories of democracy are never straightforwardly and only about an external empirical referent. They are always also theories about how to criticize and defend and justify particular understandings of what democracy is and should be. The subject matter of this book is a series of intellectual debates that are as much about how to argue the case for democratic politics as they are a set of propositional discourses about how to define democracy. I am concerned,

then, with identifying some of the "styles of reasoning" that characterize different traditions of radical democratic theory.[2]

In political theory, but also in fields such as human geography, planning theory, and environmental studies, arguments about the meaning of democracy have for some time been framed by a contrast between theories of deliberative democracy and the public sphere, on the one hand, and poststructuralist theories of agonistic pluralism and ontologies of the political on the other. In this framing, the naïvely consensual or overly rationalistic orientations of deliberative democrats, personified in the avuncular figures of Jürgen Habermas or perhaps John Rawls, are set against perspectives that acknowledge more honestly the degree to which human affairs are ineradicably shaped by power or difference or violence. This book locates critical theories of deliberative democracy and associated strands of political thought squarely within what Philip Pettit has called "the contestatory turn" in democratic theory.[3] Appreciation of the ineradicable place of contestation in political processes is not the special preserve of self-styled agonistic theories of the political. In making this argument, I will suggest that contestation is best understood as one among a variety of rationalities of action shaping political processes, rather than as an expression of a deep ontological dynamic of antagonism, enmity, or hostility.

In making an argument about how best to locate contestation in political thought, I also seek to elaborate on a specific meaning of critical theory. A great deal of avowedly critical thinking in the social sciences and humanities supposes that the primary task of critique is to challenge common sense and existing consensus; to expose processes of naturalization, normalization, and universalization; to reveal established settlements as contingent; to disrupt obviousness and inevitabilities; and to disturb closures and contest hegemonies. Such understandings of critique reveal a preference for the contingent over the necessary, the open over the closed, and the contested over the agreed upon. The main tasks of critical analysis, following this line of thought, are to reveal, to expose, and to disturb. This view of critical theory relies on the assumption that bad things happen because "people must have been got at" by the bad guys in one way or another, by secreting from view the processes that keep them enthralled to their own subjection.[4] The generic terms of criticism in this shared way of thinking are underwritten by a modernist aesthetic defamiliarization. Theory is meant to assist in laying bare the devices through which overarching structures are reproduced.[5]

The recommendation that the ordinary, the instrumental, and the everyday can and should be made strange and thereby disrupted is a recurring theme of the cross-disciplinary field of "Theory." The interpretation of the reflective distance opened up in the maneuver of defamiliarization differs across traditions of thought. A central theme of my own consideration of different traditions of political thought in this book is how the relationship between the familiar and its conditions is presented in accounts of radical democratic politics, including in discussions of the concept of the political and in philosophical discussions of the

ordinary. The urge to defamiliarize is, I will show in part 2, central to a genre of political thought that seeks to split politics in two, dividing off a settled world of politics from a more fundamental dimension that is both constitutive of that settled world and also a potential force for disrupting it and reordering it anew. I will argue throughout this book that we should resist the temptation to identify the possibility of political change with forms of extraordinary action that are sharply set off from the ordinary rhythms in which politics is routinely experienced and known.

There is something rather consoling about habits of mind that locate the task of critique in demonstrating that what appears to be essential, natural, necessary, settled, or stable is, in fact, assembled, constructed, contingent, historical, or made. These habits allow one to cope with a world of political disappointments by always knowing in advance how unhappy outcomes were secured. One way of resisting such consolations is to start from the assumption that critique is a dimension of ordinary life. Accordingly, the notion of critique I work with focuses on the tension between given facts and emergent norms. It is an idea of critique indebted to the tradition of critical theory descended from the Frankfurt School. Throughout this book, I will use the phrase "critical theory," without capitalization, to refer specifically to the lineage of thought that follows in the footsteps of this tradition. Although the phrase often refers more broadly to a range of critical traditions, I restrict it in this way to make visible the distinctive concerns of a living tradition of thought that, through the pivotal figure of Jürgen Habermas, now thrives as a strand of democratic theory. Iris Marion Young summarizes the operative understanding of critique in this tradition as an approach that aims "to evaluate the given in normative terms."[6] The idea of normative evaluation is likely to raise a few hackles, since the word "normative" has taken on a rather negative connotation in contemporary postfoundational critical thought. Young's further embellishment of this practice of critique is therefore crucial: "Critical theory presumes that the normative ideals used to criticize a society are rooted in experience of and reflection on that very society, and that norms can come from nowhere else."[7] This idea of critique as the interpretation of meanings and values already present in the lives of our fellow citizens guides my own evaluation of the ethos of different traditions of radical democratic thought. My engagement with those traditions is, then, shaped in part by a concern with exegesis. Above all, though, I seek to reconstruct the distinctive ethos of a critical theory of democracy. I am concerned here, in short, with undertaking a certain sort of reading of political theories. Let me expand a little more on the protocols of the sort of reading I have in mind.

Spatial Grammars of Political Thought

I have already admitted that the subject matter of this book is a series of intellectual debates that are about how to theorize democracy. I would like to think

that this focus is not simply a symptom of a preference for abstract speculation over practices of engagement and investigation. I am concerned with identifying the precise forms of theoreticism that constitute different strands of political theory. I understand theoreticism to refer to an approach to theory in which the world of historical affairs is reduced to "a source book of illustrations, exempla, or signs."[8] So understood, theoreticism is characteristic of styles of theory that model themselves still on genres of universalizing philosophical reasoning. There are two variations of the theoreticist gesture in radical theories of democracy. Being able to recognize them helps us to distinguish the types of ethos that differentiate traditions of thought. In one variant, the ontological derivation of the proper meaning of the political provides a frame in which worldly events can be offered up for almost immediate diagnosis as approaching or diverging from a preferred model of democratic politics. I consider this variety of theoreticism in detail in part 2. In the other variant, which I consider at length in part 3, a series of stylized facts about economic life and social change are invoked to pry apart the terms that make up inherited conceptual frameworks of normative evaluation.

The first of these approaches has lent itself readily to application in spatial disciplines such as human geography, environmental studies, planning theory, and urban studies, not least because of a shared preference for developing ontological accounts of space and spatiality in those fields. However, I will argue that it is the latter variant of theoreticism that harbors, perhaps in spite of itself, a more ordinary account of the vocation of critique, one that opens out to a program of inquiry into how democratic politics emerges in the world. But to make this case requires the suspension of some received conventions of reading that define the practice of critical thinking in those spatial disciplines that have proved so receptive to ontologically inflected political theory.

Since the 1990s there has been a breakout of interest in geographical themes in political philosophy and political theory, evident in a series of debates in which concepts such as global justice, transnational democracy, or multilevel governance have been used to question the previously taken for granted spatial imaginaries of political science and international relations. The presuppositions of those fields have included a whole host of geographical assumptions: assumptions about the scale at which democratic politics should be organized, the degree to which democratic politics necessarily requires a territorialized state apparatus, and the congruence of territory and national community, as well as more abstract assumptions about the proximity between rulers and ruled. More often than not, these assumptions become visible when political thinkers seek to address the possibility of developing forms of democratic citizenship that are more responsive, more authentic, and more encompassing than the standard model of nationally institutionalized liberal-representative democracy. Arguments about whether democratic rule should be limited to electoral practices and representative mechanisms or extended to more participatory practices such as citizens' juries or participatory

budgeting often invoke a series of geographical tropes of locality, proximity, and face-to-face engagement.[9] Likewise, debates about how to define the membership of a polity raise geographical questions about whether cultural criteria of shared belonging to a community should prevail or whether an ideal of including all those affected by decisions, irrespective of their location, can or should be instituted.

There is, no doubt, plenty of scope to interrogate the geographical vocabulary one finds in these different strands of political thought. Highly simplified understandings of globalization, migration, or borders often function as preconstructed reference points for normative or ontological reflections in these debates. It is common enough to confront such understandings with a combination of evidence of empirical complexity and the unsettling insights of relational spatial ontologies. It is a style of interrogation as admonishment, one that often depends on a rather simplistic distinction between metaphorical and material concepts of space. But my intention here is not to interrogate the geographical vocabulary one finds in different strands of political thought so much as to make sense of what the appeal to particular spatial grammars reveals about how theories of radical democracy imagine their own role in democratic life.

Matthew Sparke's *In the Space of Theory* provides a more sophisticated model of geographical criticism than that offered by invocations of the metaphor/material distinction or gestures of ontological trumping.[10] Through a detailed engagement with the geographical thinking implicit in the work of thinkers such as Arjun Appadurai, Homi Bhabha, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Timothy Mitchell, and James Tully, Sparke argues that too much contemporary social theory presents what he calls "anemic geographies." By this he means that it tends to reduce the complexities of multiple spatial relationships to a singular, privileged spatial concept-metaphor. Sparke restores to view aspects of the issues addressed by these thinkers that are obscured by their preferred choice of spatial figure.

Sparke provides the most nuanced available model for a geographical reading of political thought. Nevertheless, there is a lingering sense in his approach of seeking to correct other people's theories for not sharing in the correct understanding of spatial concepts. But one of the problems with the concepts associated with fields that claim expertise in theorizing about spatiality—concepts such the production of space, relational spatiality, flat ontologies, topological space, and assemblage—is that they tend to rely for their critical force on the idea that the ordinary usage of geographical ideas is inherently suspect. Usually this suspicion is grounded in the claim that ordinary usage presents geographical phenomena as natural, essential, or inevitable. I tend to think that this assumption about the essentially ideological work of ordinary spatial and temporal vocabularies is actually a projection of an unexamined investment in the aesthetics of defamiliarization that shapes so much radical spatial thought.

I therefore find myself unable to follow Sparke's model very far, because I can-

not quite identify with the foundational assumptions of this way of thinking about the tasks of theory, which puts a premium on developing novel spatial ontologies. I am more interested in understanding what the recourse to spatial tropes reveals about the animating concerns of different theories. I prefer to read the spatial and temporal imaginaries of political theories with a lighter touch, by acknowledging with Sparke that theories make use of specific spatial figures but doing so in order to ask what it is that these figures enable theorists to do. Mustafa Dikeç similarly focuses on the uses of spatial figures in the works of Hannah Arendt, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Jacques Rancière.[11] But I am less concerned than he is with thinking about how these spatial figures correlate with what he presents as the constitutive spatialization of the political. As I discuss in parts 1 and 2, I think the claim that the political has a privileged relation to particular spatial forms is the wrong move. I am, then, not primarily concerned with either criticizing or celebrating the spatial and temporal figures of political thought. I am more concerned with taking seriously the *spatial grammar* of different strands of political thought—and by that I mean paying attention to the actions being performed in the use of words and concepts.[12]

The analysis I pursue in this book starts from the observation that the geographical terms in and through which political thinkers now often discuss issues of accountability, citizenship, membership, opposition, and participation serve as the medium for a recurrent methodological operation. Themes such as globalization, international migration, multiculturalism, or environmental change are the real-world referents against which theorists seek to disaggregate and decompose the different normative values covered by the term "democracy": values that include autonomy, equality, freedom, legitimacy, solidarity, and sovereignty. By referring to "spatial grammar," I am suggesting the need to cultivate a way of reading spatial and temporal figures in political thought with an eye to what is really at stake in their expression. Or, to put it another way, I aim to establish what spatial and temporal vocabularies are used to *do* in the course of developing arguments.[13]

The reading of political thought that I undertake in this book therefore extends a principle of "charity" to the interpretation of the imaginary geographies of democratic theory.[14] By this I mean that rather than presuming that there is a correct spatial ontology against which all other spatial grammars must be judged, we should be sensitive to the analytical problems that political thinkers might be trying to articulate when they have recourse to what, from the specialized perspective of spatial disciplines, appear to be rather simple understandings of globalization, the transnational, or deterritorialization. I therefore ask what problems in democratic theory are made visible through recourse to ideas, for example, of globalization and transnationalism or images of rupture and event. In particular, my argument is that rather than seeking to develop ontological accounts of the essence of either spatiality or the political, we should follow the path of analytical disaggregation pursued by thinkers working in the tradition of critical theory. If we do so, we might find resources for a geographically sensitive and normatively

attuned investigation of the ways in which political agency emerges from situated experiences of injustice that generate contentious practices of variable spatial extension and reach.

For a Social Theory of Democracy

The type of reading proposed in the previous section—one that attends to the grammars of political thought—is directed by my sense that the primary task of a critical theory of democracy is to inform *inquiry*. I take it that democratic politics is one way of addressing "problematic situations," to use John Dewey's term.[15] As a form of inquiry, democracy proceeds as a practice of making sense of what is at stake in such situations, as a step toward finding ways of engaging with them.[16] This understanding should raise some suspicions about styles of theoretical reasoning that presume that the primary task of critique is to determine the essence of the political, the core ontological sense of democracy, or the prescriptively normative rules of public deliberation. In particular, it is an understanding that requires a suspicion toward the rarefied forms of philosophical reasoning evident in certain strands of radical democratic thought.

A defining feature of the fields of work that have become canonized as continental philosophy in the English-speaking academy since the 1990s is an explicit disavowal of empirical fields of social inquiry. The shift in attention from previous waves of Western Marxism or French theory—which were instrumental in transforming the research practices of both humanities and social sciences—to the more expansive-sounding idea of continental philosophy in fact involves a reassertion of a traditional form of philosophical authority.[17] One theme that runs throughout this book is the deep suspicion of modern social science that characterizes various strands of radical political thought. As we will see in chapter 1, many discussions of the meaning of democracy or of the "specificity of the political" are framed by claims about the privileged relationships between political thought and philosophy. In securing this relationship, social research is often reduced to a mere empirical supplement to proper critical reflexivity. One of the features of theories of radical democracy inflected by poststructuralist ideas, as well of ontological renditions of the meaning of the political, is the refinement of a form of philosophical analysis that claims to stand over and above the social sciences.

In the reassertion of philosophical reasoning in contemporary radical thought, some theorists have supposed that philosophy, perhaps transposed into literary theory, can discern the continuing traces of metaphysics in seemingly positive fields of investigation.[18] For its part, social inquiry is not allowed to reciprocate for the favor that philosophy supposedly does for the social sciences, that of recalling their own metaphysical commitments. The asymmetry immunizes a particular model of philosophical reasoning from any form of contextualization by social

science procedures. The reassertion of the privileged relation between political theory and philosophical reasoning, over and above the claims of social inquiry, is particularly important for theorists who seek to specify the meaning of the political. Such theorists search for a nonreductive principle of autonomy that can define both the object and the vocation of political theory. And in this search, those eager to distance themselves from political science resist instrumental or utilitarian reasoning about politics, while those eager to distance themselves from the legacies of Marxism disavow the problem of determination. Either way, the foregrounding of the concept of the political is a defining characteristic of styles of political thought that hope to liberate themselves from any relationship of accountability to the explanatory and interpretative narratives characteristic of social inquiry.

The detection of traces of philosophical or theological concepts in modern social science and social theory should hardly come as a surprise. Modern social theory is formed in no small part by the translation of philosophical concerns into new genres of description, explanation, and interpretation.[19] Herbert Marcuse once argued that it was Hegel who opened the way for philosophy to "devolve upon social theory," a transformation that finds its consummation in the work of the Frankfurt School more broadly.[20] Likewise, the history of structuralism in the twentieth century might well be interpreted as a sustained effort to carve out a distinctive space for social inquiry in between the natural sciences and the traditional humanities.[21]

Finding traces of transcendental concepts from the Western philosophical canon in traditions of thought founded, for example, by Karl Marx or Max Weber is not particularly ruinous for social science. In fact, the claim that philosophical reasoning of a certain sort can continue to stand in judgment over the social sciences actually seems rather old-fashioned. It depends on a reduction of social inquiry to a more or less formal variety of "positivism"—a view that often characterizes both radical theories of political ontology and deliberative theories of democracy, although with somewhat different inflections. I prefer to think that the flourishing of cross-disciplinary social theory is an index of the capacity of various disciplines to think philosophically in more modest ways and in closer proximity to empirical concerns.

Jürgen Habermas once accused Jacques Derrida of reducing issues that could be usefully understood through either empirical investigation or theoretical argument to the level of the merely ontic, thereby reserving the task of fundamental reflection to the unreconstructed authority of the philosopher.[22] Whether or not the charge sticks in the case of Derrida, it does stand as a warning against the frameworks of evaluation through which strains of so-called continental philosophy assert their own authority over and above more prosaic fields of social inquiry. What is lacking in assertive philosophical problematizations of political life is neatly captured by Simon Critchley's consideration of the awkward relations between the thought of Habermas and of Derrida.[23] He does not accept the

full force of Habermas's accusation but he does affirm that Derrida's theoretical categories "lack sufficient sociological mediation insofar as they are derived too directly from an engagement with tradition conceived in exclusively metaphysical or logocentric terms."[24] The point can be extended beyond the reference to Derrida's work alone. It is particularly pertinent for the concept of the political in radical democratic theory, which often suffers from a chronically undersocialized view of human life.

Theoretical debates about the meaning of the political depend on a prior conceptual splitting of political life into two parts, one more fundamental and foundational ("the political") than the other ("politics," or perhaps "police"). One can find this splitting in the work of various thinkers, including Claude Lefort, Jacques Rancière, Pierre Rosanvallon, and Sheldon Wolin. A sharp distinction between politics and the political underwrites the claim that the essence of political life can be properly apprehended only by a form of analysis that lays claim to the Western philosophical tradition while also disavowing the world of accepted meanings. At the same time, the specification of the significance of the political, with the strong emphasis on the definite article, is presumed to have unmediated purchase as a diagnostic tool for interpreting current affairs.

Strongly ontological interpretations of the concept of the political have come to sustain a variety of theoreticism of the sort already discussed, one in which a specific range of spatial practices are accorded a privileged status as proper expressions of the political. Both critical spatial theory and agonistic theories of democracy assume that genuine political energy always involves inaugural moments of transformation and that genuine critical activity always involves the exposure of contingency, the elaboration of uncertainty, or the affirmation of creativity. Both fields therefore sustain a restrictive spatialization of the political imagination, in which genuine political energy is only ever to be found off center, at the margins, at odds with the mainstream.

Political events such as the 2011 uprisings collectively known as the Arab Spring, protest activism from Spain to Greece to Turkey in the wake of the global financial crash of 2008 and the subsequent Eurozone debt crisis, and the proliferation of Occupy activism in cities across the world have inspired renewed attention to the importance of spatial practices for radical politics. Erik Swyngedouw provides a list of proper names that have, apparently, become "emblematic sites of insurrectional democratizing practices": "Taksim Square, Tahrir Square, Red Square, Place de la Bastille, Assaha-al-Khadra, Syntagma Square, Green Square, Gdansk Shipyards, Tiananmen Square, Zuccotti Park, Paternoster Square, Puerta del Sol, Plaza de la Cataluña."[25] These are all sites, so the argument goes, for the irruption of properly political action, for insurgent events that challenge the stultifying consensus of our otherwise postpolitical age. Judith Butler has used some of these same events to outline a performative theory of political action, one that revolves around the idea that the primary agency of radical political change is the

manifestation of "bodies in public."[26] Butler argues that the collective assembly of bodies on the street manifests popular opposition to injustice.[27]

The theoretical significance ascribed to the physical occupation of spaces in the analysis of contemporary activist politics reflects a particular structure of theoretical feeling, one in which the political is constituted by a distinctive spatial pattern: an excluded or marginalized figure is the point around which systems of power are temporarily closed and secured; in turn, this same figure is understood as the pivot around which those same systems might be pried open and remade. This structure of feeling is expressed in a conceptual vocabulary of constitutive outsides, hegemonic closures, suturings, or partitions of the sensible. The concern with exemplary spatial manifestations of political opposition therefore rests on a repeated image of change that characterizes discussions of the political: an instituted order is relatively stable across time but then is interrupted by insurgent, insurrectional, ruptural expressions of proper political action.

This pattern of spatialized concept formation supports a strongly hierarchical interpretation of the distinction between politics and the political. The political is always the more fundamental category, invested with all sorts of energies of creativity and disruption and vitality, whereas politics is consistently presented as, in the words of Roland Barthes, "the moment when the political changes into the same old story, the discourse of repetition."[28] The distinction between politics and the political certainly has different variations, as we will discover in part 2 of this book. But across its different forms, it sustains an image of how political change can and should take place, an image structured around spatialized contrasts of closure and openness, fixity and mobility, settlement and disruption. It is, in turn, an image that depends on a unexamined idea of time: political time consists of a kind of punctuated equilibrium, where moments of dramatic and wholesale transformation of entire fields of action interrupt periods of durable and predictable routine.[29] This temporal imagination underwrites the privilege accorded to specific dimensions of physical space as the primal scenes of authentically "political" political action: spaces of demonstration, spaces of assembly, and spaces of confrontation. I will argue that the image of the spaces of democratic politics derived from the strongly ontological interpretation of the concept of the political is poorly suited to understanding the dynamics of political life because it only ever finds what it was already looking for (or its absence).

Locating Democracy in Critical Theory

This book seeks to contribute to a social theory of democracy, a project that would presume that the capacities for creative action and reflexivity often reserved for particular dramatic events undertaken by privileged historical agents are actually much more widely dispersed than assertively agonistic theories of democracy and

ontologies of the political seem able to acknowledge. My argument is structured around a division between two genres of political thought, one that theorizes political life in a strongly ontological register and one that seeks to elucidate plural rationalities of political action. This division characterizes social theory more generally.[30] But it is particularly pertinent to the field of political theory because it cuts to the heart of the normative dimensions of democratic politics. One way of capturing the significance of the division between these two genres is by considering the fate of theories of justice in recent political thought.

Theories of justice, which have so dominated English-language political thought since the 1970s, are often considered to be irredeemably liberal and also tainted by association with universalizing and foundational forms of philosophical reasoning. Their concern with normative issues of justice is certainly at odds with the genres of ontological reasoning now favored by critical spatial theory. From the perspective of these approaches, the attention of political thought should be redirected to elaborating the ontological, even ontogenetic, conditions from which genuinely transformational political energies might be unleashed. Theories of the political are one expression of this suspicion toward normative theories. As I show in part 2, the ontologization of the political often involves an abandonment of any concern with theorizing rational action other than through heroic images of dramatic insurrection, hyper-reflexive decisionism, or ascetic knowingness.

In part 3 I argue that there is an alternative response to the critique of the alleged universalization and foundationalism of liberal theories of justice. Rather than abandoning a concern with the rationalities of action for deeper and deeper levels of ontological creativity, we might do well to follow the shift among critical theorists of democracy toward the conceptualization of *injustice* without prior reference to formulation of a universal principle of justice. I develop this proposal by drawing on a range of thinkers who share a broadly post-Habermasian understanding of critical theory as a theory of democratic justice. Following this path allows us to see that the critique of foundationalism does not restrict us to simple assertions of the necessity of contingency or condemn us to inhabit the paradoxical and ambivalent spaces that such assertions project for themselves. The key to the prioritization of injustice in critical theories of democracy lies in recognizing that the central conceptual and normative issue at stake is not a contrast between the universal and particular, or between necessity and contingency. Rather, the challenge is to reconstruct the confrontation between the claims of *impartial universalism* embedded in traditional political thought and the claims of *inclusive universalism* that animate critical theories of democracy. In working through this confrontation, analytical attention is reoriented toward identifying the plural rationalities of action through which political issues enter into the world as contested claims against injustice.

This book is organized into three parts. Part 1 is concerned with specifying what *type* of concept democracy is. I link the inherently evaluative qualities of de-

mocracy as both idea and practice, on the one hand, and a geographical inflection of conceptualizations of the application, context, and emergence of democracy on the other. The chapters in part 2 discuss different versions of the conceptual splitting of the concept of the political and the significance of the resulting spatialization of political life in terms of routines and ruptures, stability and crisis. I seek to redeem the significance of the concept of the political from the strongly ontological interpretation to which it has been subordinated in influential currents of radical democratic theory. The chapters in part 3 are concerned with making sense of what critical theorists of democracy seek to do conceptually when they appeal to narratives of globalization, transnationalism, or other spatial figures to frame their accounts. The three parts of the book therefore inform each other. If part 3 offers a response to the limits of those approaches that are at the center of the discussion in part 2, then the theories and theorists discussed in part 3 are also presented as better able to develop the form of critical analysis that is elaborated in part 1. That is, they are better able to address a set of questions about how to pursue critical inquiry into the enactment of ordinarily normative concepts such as democracy.

PART 1: DEMOCRACY AND CRITIQUE

The background to the argument developed in this book is a set of debates among a range of left-liberal and post-Marxist thinkers from the 1970s onward, in which the concept of democracy became a central motif.[31] Among other things, the heightened concern with democracy involved a more or less uneasy rapprochement with aspects of liberal thought often previously denigrated by radical traditions of political thought. From the 1990s onward, in the wake of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of actually existing socialisms, democracy retained its importance for radical thought, but under an atmosphere of increasing disenchantment. Democracy came to be defined in this conjuncture in more and more rarefied ways, as a fugitive or insurgent form whose appearance is confirmed by various newsworthy events that correspond to restrictive definitions of pure political virtue. In no small part, this belief in the rarity of genuine political action is an effect of the continued concern to secure the autonomy of the analysis of politics from both utilitarian and instrumental interpretations and from economically reductionist explanations.

It is in the context of these intellectual arguments that the first part of this book discusses what sort of concept democracy is. This is a necessary preliminary to appreciating what theories of democracy are actually about and, in particular, to appreciating the degree to which the differences between them are not open to straightforward reconciliation. I have already indicated that one aim of my argument in this book is to bring into view a contrast between an idea of critique that depends on the gestures of demystification and exposure and one that seeks

to elaborate the relationship between given facts and immanent norms. A recurring theme in radical thought is the notion that the ability to show that things could be different goes hand in hand with the imperative to change predominant understandings of what is of value. Herein lies the source of the possibility of authoritarianism that haunts radical thought, which has often found it difficult to fully acknowledge the dynamics of reflexive action through which social practice is ordinarily held together, mutates, and is transformed.[32] A pivotal issue in assessing radical traditions of political thought is therefore the question of whether the practices of reflection and justification characteristic of intellectual analysis and the practices of justification and critique found in everyday life are imagined as being fundamentally discontinuous or imagined as running along a continuum of sorts.[33] This issue is the central focus of the two chapters in part 1, "Democracy and Critique." They are concerned not with pinning down the meaning of democracy but with establishing an understanding of the meaning of concepts that is adequate to democratic norms.

Chapter 1, "An Awareness of Politics," discusses the understandings of power at work in different strands of democratic thought and how these understandings are related to distinctive pictures of the vocation of critique. One purpose of this chapter is to set out the terms for the more sustained engagement with action-theoretic styles of thought provided in part 3. Critical theorists do not suppose that power circulates in a realm of pure immanence or that the social field is shaped only by habitual entrainments or strategic pursuits of power. They assume that social life is shaped by things that matter to people and that matter differently to different people. In turn, they assume that that there is no great discontinuity between critical practices of justification exemplified by theory and practices of reflection in everyday life. This is not necessarily a consoling assumption. It makes the question of what critical theory is actually good for all the more acute.

Chapter 2, "Criteria for Democratic Inquiry," picks up on a theme introduced in chapter 1, namely the question of how to imagine the possibility that democratic norms developed in one situation can and should be applied to new situations and nonstandard cases. I take this to be the central conceptual question facing any effort to theorize democracy geographically in a postcolonial spirit. It is a theme that is central to so-called deliberative theories of democracy as well as agonistic approaches, both of which respond to the question of whether it is plausible and justifiable to derive an account of democracy from the experiences and traditions of particular places. Critical theory addresses this question through a recurring problematization of the relationships between the context-specific emergence of normative principles and the possible "context-transcendence" of those ideas. In debates about this relationship one often finds a guiding assumption that what is required is a strong philosophical account of how intercultural communication is even possible. There is a trace of the skeptical worry that the absence of such an account renders such communication dangerously provisional, if not wholly im-

possible. But the worry misconstrues pluralism as threatening to condemn us to relativism. The problem with this construal lies with the image of cultures, and the subjects that move through them, as closed off from one other. Merely arguing that borders and boundaries have now become porous does not challenge such an image. This argument only leaves in place a deeper assumption that cultures are originally singular, united, and enclosed. To more fully address these issues, chapter 2 outlines what I characterize, following Stanley Cavell and others, as an *ordinary* understanding of concept use and political judgment. This type of understanding informs a revised account of how democratic criteria are applied in the world, an account that orients us toward attending closely to the specific axes of contestation through which democratic politics emerges and expands.

PART 2: RATIONALITIES OF THE POLITICAL

In light of the account of the ordinary developed in part 1, in the three chapters in part 2 I consider the ways in which conceptualizations of the political have come to shape the ethos of critique in radical political thought. The concern with "the specificity of the political" is often shaped by a commitment to avoid reducing politics to the play of interests or to the determinisms of economistic reasoning, but also by a more widespread diagnosis of the modern world as shaped by overpowering tendencies toward the instrumentalization of all values. The unfortunate consequence of seeking to specify the political through a search for a principle of autonomy from other fields (fields of scholarly inquiry and/or fields of human practice) is the abandonment of any serious consideration of the relationships between different aspects of life. As a result, the political appears only as a break from or an interruption of the ordered routines of the social, the economic, or the technological.

My aim in part 2 is to discriminate between different interpretations of the concept of the political. My intention is to recover from beneath the weight of the ontological interpretation to which this concept is now most often subjected a more interesting concern with the rationalities of political action. In chapter 3, "The Ontological Need," I focus on arguments that derive the specificity of the political from accounts of a fundamental division between two distinct ontological layers, the political and mere politics. Chapter 4, "The Scandal of Consent," considers a distinctive post-Marxist lineage of thought about the political. It traces a fundamental cleavage within this tradition between more ontological inflections of the political (developed by thinkers such as Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Jacques Rancière) and interpretations that open up the analysis of politics as a field of plural rationalities of action (developed in different ways by Stuart Hall and Partha Chatterjee). Chapter 5, "The Significance of Conflict," considers how radical theories of agonistic democracy have sought to locate the sources of political life in general ontological accounts of human existence. It then offers an

alternative interpretation of how to think about conflict in human affairs, one that is consistent with the understanding of ordinary politics outlined in chapter 2.

Across these three chapters, my argument is not so much that the search for the specificity of the political is "misguided," as Lois McNay has put it.[34] It is, rather, that what is actually most interesting about the conceptual distinction between the political and politics gets *misplaced* when this distinction is interpreted in strongly ontological ways. In particular, what gets lost is a consideration of the ordinary dynamics of political action as elaborated in part 1. In part 2 I therefore seek to recover versions of the concept of the political that retain the focus on these dynamics, as a prelude to my fuller elaboration of this concern in part 3.

The difference in interpretations of the concept of the political that I seek to draw out is nicely captured by Agnew Heller.[35] Heller once argued that exclusion is the defining gesture of uses of the concept of the political, an emphasis evident in approaches that define a whole range of activities normally thought of as politics as actually not properly political at all. The tendency to generate radical images of authentic politics is shared by a style of theorizing that ranges from the Right to the Left, from Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss through to Chantal Mouffe and Giorgio Agamben. The mythologization of the political over and against the banal concerns of daily existence is a recurring theme in discussions of the political. Heller suggests that this mythologization follows from a tendency to think of the political "as a certain 'thing' (a quality, a factor) that may be shared (or not) by other 'things.'"[36] The scope of the concept is initially determined categorically and then applied normatively to evaluate specific formations of political life. And as I will show, the conceptual distinction between mere politics and the political is most often mapped vertically onto an image of layers of fundamental priority and secondary derivation.

In contrast to this way of conceptualizing the political, Heller suggests that the political "can be conceived of as a domain, for example, a sphere or a system, which endows whatever enters it, whenever it enters, with political nature; whatever leaves this domain ceases to be political, whenever it makes its exit."[37] This spatial image allows Heller to leave behind the "obsession with exclusion" that characterizes categorical specifications of the political. Thinking of the political in this way, as a domain, may offend the heightened sensitivities of spatial theorists attuned to casting doubt on the adequacy of spatial metaphors in other people's theories. But to dwell too much on such matters distracts from the more significant issue. Heller's point is that the political quality of phenomena does not lie in the "actual character of things" at all, and it is not best appreciated by assessing whether such things conform to a model of the essence of the properly political. The figure of the "domain," into which things can enter or exit, therefore allows Heller to draw attention to the variable formation of those things taken to be political at particular times.

In part 2 I seek to redeem the concept of the political from overly ontological

interpretations by developing Heller's suggestion of thinking of the political as a domain of action. Following this path allows us to acknowledge that theories of democratic politics might do well to focus on questions about the sources of and responses to "political evil." In making this suggestion, I am following Paul Ricoeur's account of "the paradox of the political." Ricoeur provided one of the first treatments in post–World War II French thought of the conceptual splitting of politics. At its simplest, the paradox of the political turns on the idea that there is a tension between the notion of "the polity" as an ideal sphere of political rationality and the idea of "politics" as the concrete manifestation of this ideal.[38] Stated like this, Ricoeur's paradox looks much the same as other variations of the conceptual splitting of politics that I will consider. But Ricoeur was not simply concerned with distinguishing between an essence of politics and its empirical, or "ontic," appearance. His account was written in the wake of political events of 1956, in particular the crushing of the Hungarian uprising by Warsaw Pact forces, a central event in reorienting the intellectual cultures and commitments of so-called Western Marxism and the New Left of the 1960s around issues of democracy. The lesson Ricoeur drew from these events was that asserting the autonomy of political action, its irreducibility to economic or social life, also requires an acknowledgment that political life is characterized by its own distinctive forms of evil: "politics fosters specific evils which are precisely political evils, *evils* of political power."[39] The paradox of political life that Ricoeur identifies lies here, in the relation between affirmations of the autonomy of political rationality as a good in itself and the perils of distinctive forms of evil that the enactment of politics always harbors.

In important respects, Ricoeur's elaboration of the paradox of the political anticipates the problem that motivates later accounts of the political, including those of Claude Lefort, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and Pierre Rosanvallon. It also helps us see that what is perhaps most important about those accounts is not so much a particular ontological notion of antagonism, for example, or an existentialist vision of the necessarily empty place of power in democracy. Ricoeur's account of the paradox of the political alerts us instead to the degree to which traditions of radical thought might be usefully evaluated according to the degree to which they are willing to engage with a resolutely "liberal" problem: that of imagining the shared exercise of power in light of the always present possibility of its abuse.[40]

PART 3: PHENOMENOLOGIES OF INJUSTICE

Ricoeur's account of the paradox of the political offers a different perspective on debates between apparently consensual theories of deliberative democracy and self-consciously edgy theories of agonistic democracy. We might see both these traditions as attempts to find resolutions to the possibility of political evil that

comes with any affirmation of the autonomy of political rationality. Some theorists find resources for doing so in the ambivalent energies of human desire and repulsion, some in the fragile conventions of intersubjective interaction. The chapters in part 2 try to salvage the concept of the political from overly ontological interpretations that divide political life into two parts, prioritize one part (the properly political), and then spatialize this division into an image of stable and orderly routines occasionally being interrupted by sudden ruptures. Part 3 reconstructs the shared intellectual space of critical theories of democracy in light of the discussion of the ordinary understanding of political life in part 1, an understanding in which the eventful dimensions of life are not set off against ongoing rhythms of action but are folded into them and emerge from them.

Chapter 6, "Claims of the Affected," reconstructs what is at stake in the concern among critical theorists of democracy with spatial topics such as transnational publics, migration, and immigration. I start by observing that the geographical turn in critical theory typically has a globalist inflection. This is evident in the renewed attention given to the "all affected interests" principle in theorizing new political geographies of belonging, citizenship, and responsibility. In light of the sort of charitable reading of the spatial grammar of political thought that I outlined earlier in this introduction, I argue that reconstruction of the idea of all-affectedness in critical theories of democracy actually requires a heightened appreciation for the situated contexts in which grievances and harms are generated, recognized, problematized, and acted upon. Chapter 7, "Subjects of Domination," further develops the same theme, demonstrating how the reconfiguration of all-affectedness is associated with a focus on the specific experiences of harm from which emerge claims of injustice requiring democratic response. The chapter asks what it is that critical theorists of democracy are trying to do *conceptually* when they pick apart geographical figures. I argue that what emerges from this pattern of analysis is a clear sense that democratic politics emerges in response to the specifically political evil of domination—that is, from an experience of subjection to the arbitrary will of others. Domination is a long-standing theme in critical theory, of course, but part 3 considers how central "non-domination" as a primary political value has become to contemporary critical theories of democracy. Chapter 8, "The Sense of Injustice," then draws into view how the conceptual reconstruction of ideas of all-affectedness and domination is related to a significant shift in critical theories of democracy, a conceptual shift to prioritizing injustice over ideal theories of justice. It is a move that, on the one hand, accords primacy to the sense of injustice that animates demands for justice but, on the other hand, makes public practices of acknowledgment, rationalization, and justification central to the meaning of injustice. The significance of giving priority to injustice lies in decisively reorienting critical analysis toward the assessment of the democratic qualities of public life.

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PART 1

Democracy and Critique

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CHAPTER 1

An Awareness of Politics

> As a tradition, Anglo-American analytical political philosophy, informed by liberalism, is deeply embarrassed by power and tends to ignore it. As a tradition, continental political thought and discourse, to the contrary, sees power as pervading and distorting the networks of human interaction, but offers no clear ways of eliminating the unfortunate by-product of oppressive and invasive human relationships. Both cannot deal with power as a normal, indeed pivotal, political phenomenon and as a potential resource to be harnessed to the attainment of human and social ends.
>
> **—Michael Freeden**

Democracy seems to have a simple enough meaning. It means "rule by the people." Or it means "rule by the many," to distinguish it from monarchy (rule by a single person), aristocracy (rule by the best), or anarchy (the absence of rule). It is common enough to note that the word "democracy" derives from the Greek words "demos" (the people) and "*kratos*" (power). But, as Philip Pettit observes, "Each of these words is ambiguous in an interesting way."[1] Are the people a unified community or a more pluralistic and divided populace? Should power be understood as equivalent to rule, as control, or as a synonym for domination? Is the sense of power implied by *kratos* distinct from that implied by the *archē* referred to in *monarchy* and *anarchy*? The latter word refers us to questions about the sources of authority and legitimacy that underlay systems of rule. Is the idea of rule anathema to democracy, or is democracy a distinctive way of sharing in rule? Or perhaps the power of democracy is better understood as the capacity to act?[2] If so, democracy seems to speak more to the capacity of a public to act collectively and to bring about change. So perhaps it would be better to define democracy as "the power of the people."[3]

The idea of democracy as the power of the people is the source of the deep suspicion this concept has often engendered. As C. B. Macpherson has observed, for much of the history of Western political thought, from Plato and Aristotle through to the early nineteenth century, democracy was not well thought of at all.

The original meaning of democracy was "rule by the common people, the plebeians. It was very much a class affair: it meant the sway of the lowest and largest class. That is why it was feared and rejected by men of learning, men of substance, men who valued civilized ways of life."[4] Jacques Rancière has sought to redeem the traditionally negative associations whereby democracy was used as a term of abuse: "Democracy meant the power of the people with nothing, the speech of those who should not be speaking, those who were not really speaking beings." The reference to the original Greek meaning of the word "demos" allows Rancière to assert, "Properly it designates those who are outside the count, those who can assert no particular title over common affairs."[5] Rancière revives and reaffirms the rebellious spirit apparently enshrined in the original meaning of "democracy."

Rancière's reference to the original meaning of the word "demos" is just one example of the etymological gesture that characterizes a great deal of theorizing about democracy. It reveals a tendency to think of modern democracy as a variant of a political form invented by the ancient Greeks and, more specifically, a form that has its origins in Athens of the fifth century B.C.. The appeal to the Athenian origins of democracy can be made to legitimate contemporary regimes or just as often to anchor a critical perspective on the inauthentic, fallen qualities of modern democracy. Discussions of democracy are therefore framed by Hellenocentrism, as Enrique Dussel calls it, referring to the habit of rooting all discussions of apparently universal philosophical concepts back to authoritative readings of Greek philosophy and tragedy and of Roman political thought. Following this habit of mind, the particularities of modern Western experience are taken to constitute universality itself, and in the process are sundered from their constitutive relationships with non-European cultures and contexts.[6]

The prevalence of the etymological gesture in radical political thought is often influenced by a form of analysis derived from the philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger. Such analysis tracks the historical variations of the meanings of words and ideas in order to recall to our attention aspects of these meanings that have been covered over or forgotten. The concept of the political is quite central to this tradition of analysis. For Heidegger himself, a recovery of the meaning of the concept of the political allows us to see how the history of translation is a succession of betrayals. "We think the 'political' as Romans, i.e., imperially," he asserts. And this way of thinking has lost touch, so Heidegger argues, with the distinctive experience of Truth upon which a more authentically original Greek meaning depends. As a consequence of our forgetting this experience, we are condemned to mistake the essence of the Greek meaning of the political: "our usual basic ideas, i.e., Roman, Christian, modern ones, miserably fail to grasp the primordial essence of ancient Greece."[7]

The Heideggerian maneuver of recalling the lost meanings of foundational concepts is caught up in a politically loaded assertion of an essential affinity be-

tween the Greek origins of philosophy and a particular claim of German exceptionalism.[8] We would do well to recall that this is not the only way of seeking to historically refine the meaning of concepts. Hannah Arendt's political theory, developed in conversation with the work of Heidegger, among others, also depends on an account of the Greek and Roman genealogy of modern political concepts such as freedom, justice, power, responsibility, and virtue. Arendt did not think that politics could be reduced to a single model of truth, to a proper grasp of ontology, or to the authority of philosophical reasoning. Her ambition was "to discover the real origins of traditional concepts in order to distil from them anew their original spirit."[9] On the face of it, this sounds much the same as Heidegger's attitude. But Arendt uses concepts to attend to the variations in the "underlying phenomenal reality" of political life. Rather than thinking of Greek origins having been betrayed in translation by Romans and others, Arendt sees the movements of translation as bearing the traces of specific forms of political experience.[10] Rather than bemoaning the eclipse of an authentically Greek sense of political life as a realm of unhindered free association between equals, Arendt reminds us that the wider conditions of systematic exploitation, inequality, and slavery on which such a vision depended no longer frame the "elementary experiences" of modern political life: "It is precisely the absence of rule in the public realm that characterizes the specific cruelty of Greek history."[11]

Heidegger and Arendt can stand for different ways of appreciating the historicity of political concepts.[12] In one approach, translation is always seen as a process of diminution, forgetting, or neglect. This view bestows a certain degree of authority on those able to lay claim to the privileged interpretation of proper meanings. In the other approach, translation is a movement across distinct, particular, but still recognizably political fields of experience. It is the latter approach that informs my own argument in this book.

One reason to be wary of the etymological gesture in political theorizing is that, on closer examination, Athenian democracy turns out to have been not quite so originally Greek as is often supposed. Athenian democracy was a grafting together of traveling practices and translated values rather than an original creation.[13] What is more, the idea that modern democracy is the realization or degradation of something invented by the ancient Greeks is itself a decidedly modern invention.[14] An Athenian lineage for modern forms of liberal democracy is largely a fabrication of nineteenth-century political thought.[15] As the history of this construct shows, the significance of the concept of democracy is always an effect of translations.[16] It might be best to think of democracy as an inherently divided concept with no proper meaning. Which is not quite the same thing as saying that democracy can have any old meaning one might like it to have, as we will see in chapter 2.

The reference to classical traditions also characterizes a great deal of the

twentieth-century French thought that has done so much to shape theoretical innovations in the humanities and social sciences.[17] Jean-Pierre Vernant, the most authoritative reference point in this intellectual lineage, rejected the idea that Greek thought should serve as an originating reference point for modern thought. He focused instead on locating Greek thought in the context of the societies from which it arose.[18] Vernant argues that the meaning of democracy for the Greeks pivoted around the problem of neutralizing arbitrary exercises of force through *kratos*.[19] For Vernant, there are two elements of *kratos*, referring both to legitimate authority and to violence or confrontation. Neither is more authentic than the other. Rather, according to Vernant, the recurring theme of Greek thought is the problem of how these different aspects of power are related.

In a similar spirit, the historian Paul Veyne has argued that there are two schemas in both Greek and Roman political thought, one more idealistic than the other.[20] One of these turns on the issue of rule and on relations between governors and the governed. The other examines the activist virtues that are required to constitute the polity. Veyne suggests that this latter "militant ideal" did not necessarily have much to do with the real politics of the ancient Greeks, except insofar as critics and reformers invoked it as an "exacting ideal." The distinction Veyne draws rather exactly captures the pattern of interpretation through which contemporary invocations of the Greek and Roman origins of democratic thought often work: appeal is made to exacting ideals in times of trouble in order to call into question existing configurations of rule and authority. It is here, perhaps, that we should locate the significance of any putatively classical inheritance for democratic theory. The significance lies not so much as a source of original, proper meanings to be recalled but in providing one model among others for the persistent problem of thinking relationally about the powers mobilized by democratic politics.

We can see, then, that different understandings of meaning are at the very heart of arguments about the meaning of democracy. I will return to these issues of meaning more directly in chapter 2. My more immediate concern in this chapter is with how key concepts are used in discussions of a critical theory of democracy. This includes a consideration of how to understand the relationship between democracy and power that I just alluded to: whether power is to be understood as something to be resisted from below, as a medium of agonistic collective self-assertion, or as a medium for the exercise of rule. The question of how to think about the relationship between democracy and power is central to the problem of political evil discussed in the introduction. In this chapter I address this question by considering the ways in which intuitions of human vulnerability are presented in anarchist and liberal political thought. I use this discussion to present a preliminary account of democracy as a mode of exercising power within frameworks of authorization and accountability, rather than as an alternative to rule. The chapter closes by considering the implications of this account of democracy for our picture of the tasks of critical theory.

The Critique of Power

Before proceeding further, I want to consider in more detail the difference between two distinct understandings of power that we have already seen to be present in disputed appeals to the authority of Western philosophical tradition. Interpretations of the meaning of democracy often divide between those that place an emphasis on accountability, legitimacy, and representation in systems of rule on the one hand and those that emphasize autonomous action and the self-institution of the people on the other. The difference between these two emphases is related to different ways of appealing to the authority of Greek or Roman sources. The appeal to ancient origins to authorize an understanding of democracy as a form of popular government is strongly associated with the Roman translation of Athenian politics.[21] Conflict, in this strand of thought, is a matter of disputes between equals, and the key issue is the consent of free persons to collective rule and government. But it is sometimes claimed that this understanding obscures a more original, more authentic meaning of democracy as "the forceful entry into the realm of politics of those who are deprived of political status."[22] In this latter understanding, *kratos* is about the exercise of power against an antagonist, and it informs a view of democracy as always involving claims to power. The idea of democracy as a mode of making insurrectionary claims against domination is revived, for example, in Rancière's account of democracy as an essentially anarchic form best expressed in the punctual suspension of existing orders.[23]

Democratic theory often revolves around categorical formulations that contrast imperatives of rule and order with those of dissent and struggle. Some thinkers present democracy as the power of a unified community of citizens, while others see democracy as the claim or even conquest of power by lower orders. Some thinkers view democracy as involving the consent of free persons to collective rule, while others see rule as a form of subjugation that negates any meaningful sense of autonomy. And a number of political thinkers seek to reconcile both sides of these contrasts, presenting democracy as a form in which the experience of inhabiting the abysses and aporias, impasses and paradoxes of these competing imperatives is actively embraced and cultivated. Sometimes, just to add another layer of paradox, democracy is further defined in terms of the (im)possible institutionalization of this sort of unsettling experience. What all these different views share is the idea that democracy is more than a set of procedures for selecting rulers, making decisions, or holding government to account. It is also, and perhaps most fundamentally, a particular configuration of cultural dispositions, sometimes modeled on complex theories of subjectivity, sometimes on sophisticated philosophies of aesthetics, sometimes on refined moralities of virtue.

I want to emphasize how appeals to ancient derivations of the meaning of democracy are one way in which different visions of power are elaborated. Debates in political theory often revolve around a contrast between deliberative theories

and agonistic theories of democracy and on various efforts to reconcile differences between them. In important respects, the two types of theory are associated with two broad ways of thinking about power identified by Martin Saar: "On the one hand, there is a concept of power as domination, whereas, on the other hand, there is a concept of power as constitution. The former is concerned with realisation and subjugation of wills, whereas the latter with the unleashing and channelling of multifarious forces."[24] These two ways of thinking are variations on the distinctions unearthed by Vernant and Veyne. In one view, power is understood as something wielded by some people over others, following from an idea of power as the capacity to exercise one's will. It is associated with an action-theoretic line of thinking, going as far back as Thomas Hobbes, on to Max Weber, and then to the Frankfurt School. In the other view, often traced back to Baruch Spinoza, power is understood as a constitutive feature of all social life. In this view, power is understood as a potential, a force that is not held or possessed or wielded at all. It is, rather, an attribute of relations and collectives.

The two views of power that Saar identifies capture a fundamental division in how to imagine the task of critique in social theory.[25] In the first view, power is thought of as repressive and restrictive or as subjugating, and therefore opposed to freedom. The task of critique, in turn, is to expose domination by identifying restrictions of agency and autonomy, seen as illegitimate impositions of the will of some over the will of others. The second view, which sees power as a constitutive dimension of social relations, involves what Saar calls a "flattening of the concept of power," one that effectively "changes the conceptual criteria available to us for the purposes of social critique."[26] In a strong Spinozan interpretation, critical assessment affirms the maximization of whatever increases and assists the body's power of acting and the mind's power of thinking and the minimization of whatever diminishes or hinders those same powers.[27] Radical interpretations of Spinoza's thought often suppose that this type of assessment must necessarily eschew first-person registers of agency. They thereby inadvertently elevate the rationalism central to Spinoza's own philosophy into a depersonalized, third-person register that presents evaluations of good or bad combinations as available only to those able to occupy a position outside of the situations where such evaluations might actually matter to participants.

What is most relevant about Saar's identification of two ideal-typical approaches to analyzing power and undertaking critique is his own subsequent use of Spinoza's work to challenge the either/or interpretation of power—as either a medium of domination and subjugation or a mode of empowerment and potential. Saar finds in Spinoza's work a sense of what he calls the "double potentiality" of power relations.[28] Rather than thinking of the emphasis on domination or on constitution as belonging to two incompatible ways of thinking about power, we might be better served to view them as two emphases combined in different ways by different traditions of thought. In this synthetic view, the critique of domina-

tion from an action-theoretic perspective necessarily presupposes an account of the constitutive power of subjects as free agents. Likewise, critical analysis undertaken from a perspective that privileges an ontology of constitutive relations always relies on some implicit normative sense of the restriction of the positive potential of individual and collective agents or of this potential being channeled in unproductive directions.

Saar helps us see that the political resonance of the constitutive view of power can be interpreted in very different ways. This view of power is often used to posit an image of political life as shaped by tensions between openness and closure, creativity and routine, or change and stasis. The most explicitly political interpretation of the idea of constitutive power is rooted in a tradition of Italian *autonomista* thought that finds its fullest expression in the writings of Antonio Negri. The pivotal dualism in this stream of work is a contrast between constituent and constituted power, derived from Negri's own interpretation of Spinoza's distinction between *potestas* and *potentia*. The distinction is open to various interpretations, but for Negri it names a sharp juxtaposition between power as the force of constitution, on the one hand, and power as the force of centralized, hierarchical command, on the other. Negri condenses the distinction as "human power versus absolute Power."[29]

Negri's interpretation of these two forms of power is related in turn to his elaboration of Spinoza's concept of *multitudo*—the multitude—the name given to the constructive power of the collective in Spinoza's unfinished account of democratic life. For Negri, the free expression of the multitude, the power of multiplicity, is continually subordinated by absolute power. Negri's view of the oppressive exercise of absolute power against the freedom of the multitude underwrites a definition of Spinozan politics defined as "against Power."[30] Negri's use of Spinoza's thought to construct a political ontology of constituent power has become central to a highly influential theory of activist politics centered on the concept of the multitude.[31] Thinking of constituent power as the activity of unmediated creativity leads to a view of democracy not as popular sovereignty or representation but as the performance of oppositional antagonism.[32]

The conceptual bifurcation of the concept of power by Negri presumes that a picture of political strategy can and should be deduced directly from a philosophical elaboration of the ontological features of the world itself. From this perspective, the way out of the conceptual and political impasses of Marxist class analysis is to transpose the animating questions of that tradition to an ontological level, so that the dynamics of capitalism and the resistance to capitalism emerge immanently from the same type of action. Thus, Negri's political ontology discerns in the dynamics of abstract labor the already present possibilities of fundamental transformation. He posits an already existing universality, in the form of the common modes of interdependence that capitalism depends on and parasitically draws on. In this understanding of the pure immanence of radical political action, "the will

to be against" is almost naturally occurring and certainly requires no articulation, representation, or further elaboration.[33]

Negri's division of power into two parts is one example of a broader model of ontological splitting of the political that I will consider in more detail in later chapters. It is a conceptual maneuver that installs at the center of radical democratic thought an image of political time as a kind of punctuated equilibrium, in which "events" interrupt and disrupt, and perhaps even reconstitute, functionally integrated social formations that then settle down again into durable and ordered routines. The contrast between the routines of instituted organizational orders and rare events of constitution and disruption informs a temporal imagination whereby genuine political action is necessarily insurgent and insurrectional. Democracy is the name reserved for this type of extraordinary act of rupture.

The idea that political change is best modeled on an image of decisive rupture and structural crisis has a strong hold over the imagination of radical political thinkers.[34] Although no longer couched in terms of reform versus revolution, the temporal imagination of ongoing serial reproduction versus sudden transformative ruptures continues to provide the terms of analysis and criticism for many adherents of radical democracy.

Here I want to suggest that the conceptual splitting of power into two aspects undertaken by Negri can also be used to support a less melodramatic, all-or-nothing frame of analysis and evaluation. The interpretation of the distinction between constituent and constituted power developed by Enrique Dussel illustrates this suggestion. Dussel also makes use of Spinoza's ideas in outlining his understanding of the relationship between the source and the institutionalized exercise of power. He distinguishes between *potentia*, understood as "power-as-potential," and *potestas*, the delegated exercise of power, its "necessary institutionalization." Dussel posits what he calls an "originary ontological scission" between these two dimensions. But he insists that *potestas* is the giving of institutional form to *potentia* that in itself cannot be actualized. The split between the two "is necessary, and it marks the pristine appearance of politics while representing at the same time the supreme danger to politics and the origin of all injustice and domination." Positioning himself between the anarchist who dreams of "the lost paradise of *potentia*" and the conservative who "adores the fixed and controlled power of *potestas*," Dussel argues that the analysis of politics needs to be approached as "the long history of the proper or corrupted use of *potestas*."[35]

In contrast to Negri, Dussel provides an account of two dimensions of power that does not depend on a stark categorical opposition. For him, "any exercise of power is institutional, because the power of the community as *potentia* in itself is not an initial empirical moment in time but rather a foundational moment that always remains in force beneath institutions and action (that is, beneath *potestas*)."[36] For Dussel, *potestas* names a necessary process of mediation of power that is also inherently ambiguous. His emphasis in elaborating the relationship

between *potentia* and *potestas* is not on the closure of the latter through the exclusion or elision of the former but rather on a process of backgrounding, supplementation, and risk. The source of power, as *potentia*, is always present in the political community, but it is also necessarily delegated to political institutions. These institutions exercise what he calls "obediential power." For Dussel, the "originary corruption" of the political arises when power is fetishized, when delegated political actors presume that they are the source of power. The key distinction in Dussel's work is therefore between a positive, delegated exercise of power, in the form of obediential power, and its negative form, when power has become fetishized.[37] The possibility of corruption associated with *potestas* is not an alien imposition. Nor is it a necessary outcome. Democracy, for Dussel, is a practice that explicitly questions the relationship between the proper and corrupted exercise of *potestas*.

To clarify the contrast I am making between different styles of theorizing, I would emphasize that Dussel does not present *potentia* as equivalent to democracy. Dussel's political philosophy certainly prioritizes those who cannot live fully within prevailing institutionalizations as the privileged agents of political transformation. He accords primacy to the oppressed, repressed, and excluded, all those he calls "political victims."[38] The principal motivating force of critical theory, Dussel insists, must be based on the perspective of the victims.

Dussel uses the figure of "the victim" to challenge the persistence of the binary opposition between revolution and reform in the temporal imagination of left politics. In place of this opposition, he presents the concept of "transformation." Transformation is "a change in the form of the innovation of an institution or the radical transmutation of the political system in response to new interventions by the oppressed or excluded." It is the action of political victims, but Dussel does not presume that it only takes the form of momentary events or dramatic ruptures. It is carried out "with reference to the horizon of a *new* way of exercising delegated power."[39] Dussel's account of the temporality of political action, in short, envisages a new way of exercising *potestas*, rather than its temporary negation in the expression of pure *potentia*. Rather than counterposing reform and revolution, incremental change and fundamental refoundation, Dussel's notion of transformation names a form of action that seeks "to change the course of an intention, the content of a norm; to modify a possible action or institution."[40]

I have dwelt upon Negri and Dussel's contrasting accounts of the relation between *potentia* and *potestas* in order to illustrate how the splitting of political concepts can be undertaken in very different ways. Negri's interpretation of the distinction stands for a wider tradition in which political resistance arises from any attempt to secure order or institutionalize power. In this sort of interpretation, the constitutive view of power derived from Spinoza is given ontological priority as the source of genuine radical political energy, which emerges in crisis events of dramatic rupture. Dussel uses the same distinction to provide a nuanced account

in which dissent arises from situated experiences of power exercised to reproduce specific wrongs of exploitation, oppression, or violence.

Dussel's work is one example of the sort of synthesis that Saar recommends between the constitutive view and the action-centered view of power. In Dussel's case, the idea of power as a collectively generated medium of action is used to raise the question of how this capacity can be wielded to expand social justice. A key feature of Dussel's account is the idea that the exercise of power is inherently risky. He places those most susceptible to the corruptions of collectively generated power at the center of his own political philosophy. For him, the core concern of critical analysis should be to respond to the negation of the corporeality of all those dominated as workers, indigenous peoples, slaves, the exploited, and women.[41] In making the corporeality of victims of injustice the crux of his version of critical theory, Dussel helps us to see that debates about democracy and power have at their heart not just assertive virtues associated with concepts of agency, collective action, and mobilization but also a concern with the exposure to particular sorts of harm associated with what he calls "corrupted power." We should not, then, think of disputes between different views of power as merely conceptual, open to resolution depending on one's own theoretical inclinations. We might instead think of these disputes as turning on different interpretations of the place of vulnerability in our understandings of democratic politics.

The Vulnerabilities of Democracy

One feature of the Spinozan view of power discussed in the previous section, in which power is accorded an ontological status as a constituent dimension of social relations, is the idea that democracy itself is the underlying immanent principle of social life. This idea finds expression in a range of contemporary discussions around the theme of the commons, discussions animated in part by a concern with redeeming communism from its infelicitous historical associations.[42] The idea of the commons is also a central theme in the resurgence of interest in anarchism as a theory and practice of activist politics. In both cases, strong claims are made about the proper meaning of democracy. From an anarchist perspective, democracy is one name for the peaceable negotiation of different viewpoints toward an agreed upon path of action. This is understood as a benign process of "spontaneous ordering" that can properly flourish when external assertions of authority, whether in the form of terror or bureaucracy, are absent.[43] A consideration of anarchist political thought is of significance here, then, because it provides a simple image of the sources of harm to which democratic politics responds, an image that itself rests on a very specific spatial imagination.

Building on the view that anarchism refers to the absence of rule and the promise of a politics without "the power of command," the anthropologist David Grae-

ber suggests that democracy has to be defined in terms of "the process of collective deliberation on the principle of full and equal participation." Graeber's account of democracy revolves around three related conceptual propositions. The first is a straightforwardly sovereign conception of power, in which any and all forms of organized authority are presented as embodiments of violence. To live under a state, he suggests, is to live "in a society where rules are enforced by the threat of prisons and police."[44]

Graeber's second proposition is that democratic deliberation is a consensual procedure. Drawing on the practices of contemporary activist movements, Graeber presents "consensus process" as the pivotal practice in his democratic theory. Characterized by a complex set of procedures of "blocking" and "standing aside," consensus process is a form of deliberation that aims to develop proposals acceptable to all members of a community. It is a model for reaching agreement over a course of action without having recourse to measures that compel people to go along with something that they have not freely agreed to do: "The essence of consensus process is just that everyone should be able to weigh in equally on a decision, and no one should be bound by a decision they detest."[45] It should be noted that the second clause here does not necessarily follow from the first principle. One might reasonably hold that given the chance to contribute equally on a particular decision, people do have some obligation to respect a decision that does not quite go the way they would have preferred. Graeber excludes this line of reasoning, not least on the grounds that given the right conditions of face-to-face interaction, people will move toward consensual agreement anyway. His understanding of democracy is underwritten by a spatial imaginary of proximate face-to-face communication as the source of genuine political comity. Graeber argues that spatial proximity is the condition for consensual political practice, because in face-to-face communities it is apparently much easier "to figure out what most members of that community want to do, than to figure out how to convince those who do not to go along with it."[46] Even more fundamentally than this empirical proposition, Graeber's account of democracy rests on a rejection of the idea that people should ever be compelled to act in ways that they do not approve.

Consensus process is, then, a model of direct democracy that puts a premium not just on participation but above all on nondivisive agreement. It stands opposed, therefore, to voting procedures, which by definition encourage division. The vision of democracy as a consensus process has a rather specific purview, it should be said. It is primarily a model for how to think about the tasks of organization in which the primary unit of political community is a group of more or less like-minded activists. The most prominent reference point against which it is developed is a model of the democratic-centralist vanguard party. This rather restricted frame of reference is justified by reference to the idea of "prefiguration."[47] Consensus process is not just about a set of procedures of deliberation. It is meant to anticipate the future form of "a culture of democracy."[48]

The idea that power is always underwritten by violence is vital to the anarchist vision of consensus process as a means of reaching nondivisive agreements. This vision in turn depends on the third proposition in Graeber's reconstruction of democracy as an anarchist practice, which is a claim about the immanent presence of communism in social life. He provides an updated version of Peter Kropotkin's account of the immanence of fully developed "communistic anarchy" in existing modes of social life.[49] For Graeber, all sorts of activity, from voluntarily helping one's neighbors to ordinary market transactions, embody "everyday communism."[50] We are, says Graeber, all communists when we are with the people we know and love and work with, indeed, when we are involved in any and all sorts of cooperative activity with others. It is a view that leads him to declare, "All societies are communistic at base, and capitalism is best viewed as a bad way of organizing communism."[51]

Graeber provides the clearest expression of the political imagination of contemporary anarchist thought and of its claims to embody the true meaning of democracy. It a perspective defined by the conceptual reduction of power to violence, by a constricted spatial imagination of consensus process and strong temporal claims for prefiguration, and by an immanentist understanding of communism as the pervasive if unrecognized condition of all human cooperation. It is a style that resonates with certain strands of post-Marxist thought that likewise look upon the state as a monstrous usurper of popular energies and that find traces of a future communism in alienating processes of modern bureaucracies and market capitalism.[52]

The significance of the anarchist tradition for my discussion here is that it dramatizes a specific way of thinking about the vulnerabilities associated with the exercise of democratic power. It is a tradition that attends closely to the harms that can accompany the exercise of authority and rule. But the sources of these harms are presented as being external impositions on the authentically convivial disposition of "gregarious animals" toward cooperation.[53] The starkly dichotomous view of power characteristic of anarchist thought is illustrated by the work of James Scott. For Scott, the art of "seeing like an anarchist" involves developing the sensitivity to be able to discern forms of voluntary cooperation that escape the hierarchies that define rule by states. Such forms of cooperation are routinely present in ordinary and everyday activities, he argues, and in certain cases enable whole societies to define themselves against the presence of the state.[54]

As with other anarchist thinkers, Scott's work turns on a straightforward opposition between good and bad forms of power. On the one hand, there is top-down rationalism, characteristic of bureaucratic ways of "seeing like a state."[55] On the other hand, there are various means of evading, withdrawing, and withholding from engagement with states that Scott once characterized as "weapons of the weak."[56] As in Graeber's work, in Scott's account of "seeing like a state" and "the

arts of resistance," the political imagination at work depends on a distinctive spatialization. In Scott's case, the state is presented as both *external* to society and *vertically* superordinate above it.[57] Both writers illustrate the degree to which Mikhail Bakunin's rhetoric of horizontality and verticality remains central to the imagination of anarchist political thought. Bakunin contrasts bottom-up virtue and top-down imposition, a contrast through which he elaborates collectivist anarchism in opposition to the apparently authoritarian political strategies promoted by Karl Marx.[58] The image of power being exercised from the top down through a series of forcible commands or impositions and of resistance arising from the noncoercive vitality of a self-organizing collective is remarkably resilient across various strands of radical political thought and cultural analysis.

The operative understanding of power in Scott's work follows from the definition provided by another founding figure of anarchist political thought, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, which Scott cites approvingly: "To be ruled is to be kept an eye on, inspected, spied on, regulated, indoctrinated, sermonized, listed and checked off, estimated, appraised, censured. . . . To be ruled is at every operation, transaction, movement, to be noted, registered, counted, priced, admonished, prevented, reformed, redressed, corrected."[59] The horror expressed in this formulation at the thought of finding one's own actions shaped by the will of others is a recurring theme of anarchist thought. It is a reaction that presumes in advance that all relationships of heteronomy are reducible to relationships of domination, oppression, or violence.

It is here, in the interpretation of relations of autonomy and heteronomy, that we can see how evaluating the claim of anarchist thought to embody the true essence of democracy turns on a small but highly significant distinction: the difference between the idea of *consent* to being ruled or governed, on the one hand, and on the other hand the idea of self-government as a form of *consensus*. Thinking of democracy with reference to the first idea implies accepting the need for collective action that is binding in some sense. It involves thinking of democracy as a system of authority, among other things. Anarchist political thought privileges freely arrived at agreements and assumes that having to consent to authority is a negation of a more authentic orientation toward consensus.

In order to draw out the distinctive understanding of the sources of human vulnerability that differentiates consent from consensus, I turn to the account of power captured in Judith Shklar's notion of the "liberalism of fear."[60] The liberalism of fear has some passing similarities to the anarchist imagination, not least in a shared concern about the dangers posed by centralized state authority. But whereas anarchism interprets these dangers primarily as undermining a more fundamental inclination toward voluntary cooperation, Shklar invokes a much scarier image of the physical and mental harms that people face not just from exposure to hierarchies of authority but also from exposure to one another. Shklar's

"dystopic liberalism" builds from an appreciation of the pluralism not of interests, opinions, or even comprehensive doctrines but of human virtues and vices.[61]

In Shklar's view, liberalism is most concerned with securing the conditions necessary for the exercise of personal freedom: "Every adult should be able to make as many effective decisions without fear or favour about as many aspects of her or his life as is compatible with the like freedom of every other adult. That belief is the original and only defensible meaning of liberalism. It is a political notion, because the fear and favour that always inhibited freedom are overwhelmingly generated by governments, both formal and informal."[62] This view of liberalism shares with anarchism a deep suspicion of the harms that can be done by the concerted exercise of power. The difference between an anarchist and a liberal perspective might appear to lie in the emphasis, evident in Shklar's definition, on individual freedoms as opposed to the collective action envisaged by an anarchist search for consensus. But the relevant issue is not the balance between individualism and collectivity. It is the question of how to treat the fact of pluralism. The defining emphasis in Shklar's liberalism is on the potential for conflict arising from different people's exercise of freedom. It is an emphasis that marks both a practical and a normative acknowledgment of the irreducibly pluralistic character of human life—and an acknowledgment that people are as prone to vice as they are to virtue. It is an acknowledgment that anarchist thought struggles to concede.

In Shklar's hands, liberalism appears as a much more distrustful and gloomy style of thought than anarchism, which tends to match a paranoid cynicism toward the state with a romantic optimism about the capacity of people to get along peaceably under the right conditions. Shklar's liberalism eschews the search for rationalistic consensus. It is shaped by a concern for giving weight to "ordinary vices," those misanthropic dispositions to hypocrisy, betrayal, and snobbery that are a basic quality of human sociability.[63] Above all, Shklar places the evil of cruelty at the center of her vision, because for her the always-present possibility of cruelty generates fear—and systematic fear makes the exercise of freedom impossible.[64] Shklar therefore makes questions of tyranny and domination central to her vision of liberalism. Hers is an avowedly affective image of liberal politics: "For this liberalism the basic units of political life are not discursive and reflecting persons, nor friends and enemies, nor patriotic soldier-citizens, nor energetic litigants, but the weak and the powerful." Given this understanding of the difference between the weak and powerful, for Shklar the freedom that liberalism must seek to secure "is freedom from the abuse of power and intimidation of the defenceless that this difference invites."[65] In short, the animating concern of Shklar's liberalism lies not with being compelled to act against one's better inclinations. It is a rather more substantive worry about being physically or mentally harmed.

Shklar's emphasis on the relations between the weak and the powerful expresses a specific commitment associated with the idea of the liberalism of fear. This approach does not presume that the task of political thought is to urge a

particular course of action on someone in a position of power. It is, rather, a view that places at the center of analysis what Bernard Williams once referred to as an "awareness of politics." By this he means an appreciation of the fact that questions about the limits of state power matter most to those who are not empowered at all.[66] But we should be clear about just what this sort of awareness requires of critical theory. Whereas anarchism holds out the possibility of a unifying form of sociability that overcomes division by ascribing unlikely virtues to all participants in joint ventures, for Shklar the value of liberalism lies precisely in the affirmation of a division between public and private spheres. Freedom, she holds, depends on the drawing and redrawing of this line, irrespective of where exactly it is drawn. The affirmation of division is the defining feature of this kind of fearful liberalism, one that presumes that the state can be both dangerous and protective. In its emphasis on cruelty and other ordinary vices, Shklar's vision makes a concern for victimhood quite central to political theory while also warning against either the identification with or the idealization of victims of injustice.[67]

I have invoked Shklar's distinctive version of liberal thought in order to draw out a contrast between different ways of thinking about the vulnerabilities to power associated with democratic politics. The contrast allows us to see that one of the chronic problems with anarchism is what one might call its misplaced optimism. It is not that anarchism is too optimistic or that liberalism necessarily embodies a pessimistic view of human togetherness. It is, rather, that the distribution of optimism and pessimism is poorly drawn in anarchist thought. Graeber's anarchism shows no sign of acknowledging the positive qualities of institutionalized legitimate authority (Scott's does so, if somewhat grudgingly) nor much appreciation of the irreducible pluralism that might limit the application of consensus processes. Shklar's account of the liberalism of fear, by contrast, brings into view a more complex sense of democratic politics as a response to certain forms of harm associated with the exercise of power, a response which harbors certain potentials for harm of its own.

The contrast I am interested in here is best captured by John Dunn, who applies the vocabulary of horizontality and verticality that comes so easily to political thought to differentiate two attitudes about the potential sources of harm to which people are exposed. He suggests that democracy is associated with a feeling that the harms that potentially follow from people acting without any mediation by legitimate authority might be "far more dangerous than vertical subjection to such authority." It is here, he suggests, that the fundamental difference between anarchism and democracy arises: "Anarchists, for whatever reason, prioritize vertical over horizontal hazards. Democrats, however nervously, prioritize horizontal over vertical hazards."[68] Dunn's contrast might be a little too starkly drawn. But it does capture something important about the difference between the idea of anarchism and the idea of democracy, and it makes clear the reason for not collapsing the latter into the former.

Dunn's contrast between democracy and anarchism in terms of their respective understandings of the sources of harm to which people are most exposed is associated with his strong affirmation that politics is "inherently concerned with rule." In a reference to classical thought of his own, he invokes the authority of Aristotle, for whom rule is "compelling large numbers of human beings more or less systematically to act as they would not otherwise be inclined, whether or not to their own net advantage."[69] For Dunn, democracy "is one (very broadly defined) form of being ruled: in the modern world, one broadly defined form of state. It is not, and cannot be, an alternative to being ruled."[70] The emphasis here not just on rule but also on being ruled might well jar a little, upsetting any libertarian sensibilities we might all harbor. But rule is not in and of itself an affront to democratic sensibilities. The fascination, from Aristotle to Robert Dahl, with the idea that the type of equality required by democratic ideals is best achieved by allocating offices by lottery is one indication that the more relevant issue is determining how rule is to be *shared*. The emotional appeal of the consensual vision presented by Graeber, or any discomfort provoked by Dunn's account of being ruled, is generated by very different understandings of the conditions of human civility. It is a difference that Shklar's discussion of ordinary vices and of the effects of fear on the exercise of democratic freedom brings into focus for us. Which of these views most appeals might well depend on one's willingness to accept that demands for democratization arise from feelings of powerlessness that can have multiple sources.

The Powers of Democracy

I have dwelt on the contrasts between anarchist political thought and strands of fearful liberalism in order to specify the understanding of democratic politics that is central to this book. We have seen that a consideration of the meaning of democracy, of its value as both an ideal and a practice, requires a reckoning with questions of power. Recalling Dussel's account of political power, the fundamental question facing any analysis of the meaning of democracy is *how* power is exercised, not whether it should be or not. But in saying this, of course, I am invoking a particular understanding of power. It is one that follows from Hannah Arendt's rejection of the view that power is simply a "form of mitigated violence."[71] Likewise, for Michel Foucault, power relations are conceptually quite distinct from relations of violence.[72] For both thinkers, insisting on the specificity of the concept of power follows from thinking of power as a concept of action, or, if you like, a medium for the cultivation of freedom. Both thinkers stand in a longer line of thought that conceptualizes power democratically, by reference to a norm of developmental freedom rather than the individualized maximization of utilities.[73] Power and freedom should not be thought of as mutually exclusive at

all. Power is understood as the ability to use and realize one's capacities. Power, in this understanding, is not thought of as simply a synonym for domination. Rather, domination is thought of as standing at one end of a continuum of power relations and is defined as the most extreme restriction of freedom—which is understood as "the capacity to participate in shaping the limits that define what is socially possible."[74] Power is in turn viewed as a type of relation "that is connected to the abilities of agents to bring about significant affects, either by furthering their own interests or affecting the interests of others, positively or negatively."[75] This view of power certainly leaves open questions about the exact distribution of those abilities and about the interests served or affected by the exercise of power in different situations. It reorients critical attention to the asymmetrical interdependencies on which capacities to act freely rely. And this is precisely why it recommends itself as a frame for inquiring into democracy as a modality of power.

In order to further specify why it is important to think about democracy as a mode of exercising power in the sense defined above, I propose that we should take quite seriously Iris Marion Young's suggestion that democracy is not just a form of rule but a mode of coercion. Young's argument is a variation on the idea that democracy requires that people affected by a decision should have some say in how the issue at stake is formulated and acted on: "Democracies ideally are polities in which coercion is legitimated in some demonstrable way by processes in which those obliged to follow the coercive rules have had the opportunity to influence their formation."[76] The insistence on coercion here is an affirmation of an aspect of democracy that Graeber expels from his definition—the aspect of consenting to be bound by decisions with which one does not agree. If one thinks of power as just a synonym for violence, then Young's definition will appear almost perverse. But that is precisely the point of raising it here. It is common enough to affirm that power must now be understood as a positive as well as a negative mode of action. And, as already indicated, we would certainly do well to think of power as a plural concept referring to various relationships that range from domination to persuasion.[77] But it is less common to acknowledge that different forms of power function through the enactment of different normative values.[78] This latter idea is central to Young's own account of democracy, an account that rests on her insistence that there is a difference between "the use of force by a powerful actor" and "the legitimate exercise of force." As she continues, "Many doubt that there is such a distinction, but they cannot be democrats."[79] Acknowledging the distinction that Young makes helps to differentiate social theories that take democracy seriously as a problem from those that are happy to present it as merely an ideal.

Perhaps, then, the fundamental issue separating the two ways of conceptualizing power identified by Saar—an action-theoretic approach and a constitutive approach—turns on whether one thinks that the appeal to the idea of legitimacy made by Young can be maintained without lapsing into bad faith. The idea that relations of coercion could ever be rendered legitimate through some procedure

of consent is often thought to have been shown to be hopelessly naïve by adherents to an ontological view of constitutive power. The work of Foucault is often invoked to justify the rejection of any concern with thinking about power in relation to issues of consent or legitimacy, on the grounds that he demonstrated how power relations always already construct any putative freedom of subjects. But this disobliging interpretation of the genealogy of modern freedom is not necessarily quite so inimical to questions of democratic legitimacy as is often supposed.[80]

The idea that free subjects are formed in and through relations of power has a specific inflection in Foucault's work. By presenting relationships of power in terms of "a set of actions upon other actions," Foucault opens up a broad understanding of the process of governing as the effort to structure "the possible field of actions of others."[81] In terms of Saar's distinction discussed above, Foucault's distinctively governmental sense of power combines elements of an action-theoretic emphasis on the mobilization of competing wills as well as an emphasis on the constitutive relations from which the capacities to act are derived: "Power *is* relations. Power is not a thing. It is a relationship between two individuals, and a relationship that allows one individual to conduct the conduct of another or to determine the conduct of another—to determine their conduct voluntarily according to a number of objectives that are his own. In other words, when one examines what power is, one sees that it is the exercise of something one could call government, in the broadest sense of the term."[82] In this definition, Foucault provides a view of power as something that can be exercised only insofar as subjects are free, free in the sense of acting within a field of possible ways of behaving or performing. Such a view suggests in turn that democracy might be best thought of as possible only in situations where such governmental power relations exist in the first place: "Broadly speaking, democracy, if we view it as a political form, can only exist to the extent that there are, at the level of individuals, families, and everyday life, if you will, governmental relations—a certain type of relations of power that are produced. That is why democracy cannot take place just anywhere."[83] Foucault here describes power and democracy as dependent on one another rather than as mutually exclusive. Power relations are presented as the very condition for the emergence of democratic problems.

Rather than thinking of Foucault as an example of a theorist of constitutive power who demonstrates the naïveté of appeals to legitimacy, the emphasis on both constitutive relations and strategic action in his view of power allows us to better specify how legitimacy matters to democratic politics. Foucault helps us navigate a path between a hopelessly grim view of the world that can easily follow from the idea that power relations are constitutive of any and all claims to legitimacy and an overly rosy view that follows from the idea that power relations can be legitimated through contractual agreement.[84] Whether or not they are well founded in philosophical terms, *claims* to legitimacy play a dynamic causal role in democratic politics, insofar as it is as a form of politics that depends on strategic

moves that seek to mobilize and shape power relations, that is, to influence the actions of free subjects.

I have drawn on Foucault's ideas to emphasize that the view of power as a constitutive element of human affairs does not necessarily render the concern with questions of domination, emancipation, and legitimacy redundant. Democratic politics, after Foucault, can be seen as one distinctive way of configuring a field of situated practices that seek to shape actions and outcomes. But we also need to remember that the crucial emphasis of Saar's elaboration of the two views of power is on the ways in which different understandings of power inform distinctive models of the vocation of critique. The issue in this chapter, after all, is not deciding on the correct concept of power but rather discerning a way of pursuing democratic inquiry in light of the "awareness of politics." We therefore need to consider the status of critique a little further in order to better appreciate why the interpretation of the relationship between these two views of power has come to settle on understandings of democracy as a means of enhancing non-domination in human affairs.

The Justificatory Dilemmas of Critical Theory

Different ways of understanding the concept of power, we should recall, matter because they inform different understandings of the very meaning of critique. With this in mind, I will close this chapter by arguing that the fundamental schism that divides different approaches to radical democracy does not necessarily concern competing interpretations of key analytical concepts such as power. It concerns, rather, different understandings of the vocation and ethos of critical analysis.

To elaborate on this argument, I draw on Maeve Cooke's account of different strategies for justifying visions of social transformation.[85] She identifies four broad approaches, two of which she describes as "authoritarian" insofar as they presume that their own claims are immune from further justification or criticism. One of these is a purely conventionalist position, which argues that the possibility of change is regulated by the norms that define any given community. Another involves an appeal to transcendent authority of some sort, perhaps to religion or to a teleology of historical realization. Both of these perspectives arrive at foundational principles that discount the transformative potential of the reasoning practices of human agents.

In Cooke's view, what distinguishes critical social theory from both conventionalist and transcendent views of critique is a commitment to "nonauthoritarian justification" and "affectively imbued, rational motivation." She suggests that there are, however, two distinct traditions informed by these twin commitments: a "radically contextualist" (more or less poststructuralist) tradition and a "context-transcending" (more or less deliberative) tradition. Different types of appeals to

normative ideals characterize the two traditions. Radical contextualists appeal to "normative ideas implicit but not fully realized within a given sociocultural context." Context-transcending theories appeal to "normative ideas that are at once immanent to the sociocultural context in question and transcend it."[86] It should also be said that these two traditions of critical thought depend on different spatial imaginaries. In the first, contexts are understood to be temporarily enclosed fields, which are subject to iterative disruptions by mobilizing excluded or marginalized elements. In the second, contexts are thought of as particular instantiations of potentially universalizable possibilities.

The differing justificatory styles identified by Cooke indicate a fundamental fault line separating different ways of theorizing transformative political agency. This fault line underlies debates between agonistic and deliberative approaches to democratic theory, and it helps to determine the different ways of conceptualizing power already discussed. The common feature in both the radically contextualist and the context-transcending approaches is the search for what Nancy Fraser calls a "foothold" in the world that can warrant the critical elaboration of the possibility of transformation.[87] The two approaches are differentiated by their respective understandings of the *type* of foothold that is required. Finding common cause with subaltern struggles of the moment will do for some approaches, whereas other approaches require a stronger, more justifiable account of why some struggles might be considered more or less emancipatory than others. Both approaches are certainly concerned with providing some general account of the sources out of which subversive and transformative energies emerge. What a reconstruction of the normative commitments of communicative action is asked to do in Habermas's work (and in more or less diluted form for other deliberative theorists), ontologies of lack, absence, the vitalism of life, antagonism, or heterogeneous assemblage (and sometimes even set theory) are asked to do for different versions of poststructuralist agonism and post-Marxist political thought. These ontological narratives are invoked in order to serve as reasons for believing that current wrongs can and might be challenged, transformed, and overcome.

The significance of the justificatory differences between action-theoretic styles of critical theory and ontological styles of theory that Cooke identifies can be better appreciated by considering a distinction drawn by Axel Honneth. Honneth locates different strands of critical social theory within a historical narrative of the exhaustion of the productionist paradigm of revolutionary change inherited from classical Marxism.[88] Within the terms of this tradition, as long as it could be assumed that the proletariat was the bearer of universal historical transformation, no further effort was required to define experiences and practices that would guarantee this transformation. In the wake of the passing of this paradigm, and of the philosophy of consciousness on which it depended, Honneth argues that two different paths have been taken in the search for new grounds for asserting the possibility of transformative political agency.

In the first route, in what Honneth calls "normatively charged" accounts of the human psyche, drives, or the vitalism of bodies, transformative agency is relocated to deeper ontological levels of one sort or another. In this ontological trajectory, the idea of agency itself is theoretically transformed. It is now understood as an immanent presence in the world, which requires no further elaboration by agents. This trajectory cleaves most closely to the constitutive conception of power identified by Saar and follows the radically contextualist route of justification discussed by Cooke. It is often associated with a narrative that still seeks to honor Marx's predictive insights by assuming that capitalism actually has succeeded in fully realizing the real subsumption of the whole of life to capital through the generalization of the commodity form. So it is that capitalism is presented as a desiring machine or as a system for the production of subjects.[89]

In a second trajectory beyond the confines of the productionist paradigm, emancipatory and transformative potentials are located away from an exclusive focus on a single form of action, that of labor, in order to encompass a wider variety of forms of action. The main reference point here is Habermas's reconstruction of critical theory around an action-theoretic model of communicatively mediated interaction. But this trajectory is also followed by a broader strand of contemporary social thought concerned with understanding the plural rationalities of action.[90]

The distinction that Honneth draws between the trajectories taken by ontological and action-theoretic styles of social thought helps to clarify the issue separating agonistic theories of the political from more deliberative styles of political theory. The issue at stake is not really a contrast between theories that privilege conflict and contestation and those that privilege consensus and agreement. I would suggest that the more fundamental issue is how the different strands of thought approach the problem of normativity. There are two aspects to this issue.

First, there is a fundamental difference between these approaches over the question of whether the critical dimensions of social thought do indeed require some sort of normative justification. Thinkers working in a vein of critical theory derived from the Frankfurt School tend to think that they do, although they differ on what form and what strength this normative justification can and should take. Poststructuralist theories and ontological accounts of the political tend to presume either that this sort of normative justification is not necessary or that it is not a task to which theoretical reason is equal.

Second, the two approaches to critique differ over how they understand the force of norms to actually operate in practice. In one strand of thought, the social is understood to exist on a single plane of immanence, so that the normative dimensions of social life appear to be of little concern, or they are reduced to the self-realizing force of normalization. Either way, no room can be found for the ordinary give-and-take of reasons in helping to move social life along. The animating force of transformative politics is found in dynamic ontologies of im-

manence.[91] Such a view finds its apotheosis in the analysis of "bodies in space" and the dynamic potential of "collective affects."

By contrast, in the action-theoretic strand of thought the determinative role of normative practices of justification in coordinating social life is given much more credence, whether in relatively weak explanatory ways or in more strongly foundational ways. "Normative" is often thought of as a dirty word, wrapped with intimations of prescription and treated as a synonym for power, a name for all those subtle impositions on us that deserve to be criticized and resisted. But living beings are not indifferent to the conditions of their lives, and in that simple sense life is a normative activity.[92] Life is unavoidably "fraught with ought."[93] The dimension of "oughtness" that characterizes any number of actions, practices, and processes is certainly not exhausted by considerations of rationality, justification, and validity. It extends to all sorts of ordinary aspects of fitness, appropriateness, value, and health, as well as the antonyms of each of these and other normative terms. So we might simply think of normativity as referring to "the whole range of phenomena for which it is appropriate to apply normative concepts, such as correct or incorrect, just or unjust, appropriate or inappropriate, right or wrong, and the like."[94] Understanding norms as "implicit properties of practice," rather than as rules standing above practices or behind action, suggests that ethical and moral concepts neither exhaust the normative realm, nor do they necessarily best represent what is at stake in normativity.[95] Thinking of norms of action as ordinary features of life and practice shifts the meaning of normativity away from the strongly "antinormative" interpretation that has become almost second nature in some strands of contemporary cultural theory.[96]

If we approach traditions of critique in terms of their different attitudes toward issues of normative justification, then it becomes clear that a fundamental problem for any critical practice of theorizing about democracy is the challenge of theorizing democratically. It is a grand-sounding challenge, I realize, but all I mean by raising it is to foreground the need to squarely address the "justificatory dilemma" that various traditions of self-consciously critical social theory all share. The dilemma derives from the fact that any claim of criticality depends for its force on demonstrating the possibility of transforming people's practices, norms, and commitments, not just as a factual possibility but also as a normatively preferable possibility. As Cooke observes, the challenge for critical theorists, then, is to justify both the plausibility and the validity of their alternative visions in a nonauthoritarian register: "On the one hand, they must endeavour to proceed in a nonauthoritarian manner by taking account of the historicity of knowledge and validity claims, recognizing the subjectivity and partiality of ethical judgements, and acknowledging the possibility that claims to context-transcending validity are perhaps yet one more means of exercising repressive social power. On the other hand, they must seek to uphold ideas of the good society that raise claims to validity that are not reducible to the contingent preferences of the inhabitants

of historically specific, sociocultural contexts."[97] The first of Cooke's points here is a warning aimed at post-Habermasian styles of critical theory. The second, more pertinent, point is a warning about the imaginative limitations of radically contextualist, poststructuralist, and ontological styles of critical thought.

Of course, at least one side in the disputes under consideration here might not accept the pertinence of Cooke's presentation of the "justificatory dilemma" facing critical theory in the first place. It is, after all, a problem that arises most explicitly from within the self-understanding of the action-theoretic tradition associated with Habermas and others. It reflects, in turn, a commitment to an ethos of reason-giving in preference to the ethos of defamiliarization that shapes strongly ontological styles of thought. Nevertheless, the recurring concern with democracy that defines post-Marxist strands of theory associated with figures as diverse as Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort, Ernesto Laclau and Jacques Rancière, Etienne Balibar and Judith Butler, and Alain Badiou and Chantal Mouffe does suggest that the challenge of theorizing democratically about political change resonates more widely. I will pursue this suggestion further in part 2.

Intimations of the Ordinary

I started this chapter by considering how the meaning of democracy is inevitably related to disputes about how best to understand the meaning of words and concepts. Different approaches to this issue proceed from different models of the authority of interpretation. We saw that different accounts of the meaning of democracy are intimately related to specific concepts of power, and these differences in turn inform different attitudes toward the status of rule in democratic politics. By focusing on the vulnerabilities to which people are potentially exposed by the concerted exercise of power, I suggested that democracy could be understood as a response to certain forms of harm associated with horizontal relationships between people *and* the potential forms of harm associated with the vertical exercise of power. From this perspective, practices of rule appear not simply as examples of more or less forcible compulsion. Rule is also revealed to depend on certain forms of active cooperation and to enact the pursuit of positive conditions of public life.

One conclusion that emerges from my discussion of disputed understandings of democracy and different notions of power is that the meaning of political concepts in part depends on a prior determination of "the meaning of meaning."[98] And we might suppose that some theories of meaning are more democratic than others. There is an elective affinity between the search for deep ontological sources of political energy and the etymological gesture discussed at the start of this chapter. Both reflect a strong commitment to the view that critical understanding requires us to keep our distance from ordinary senses of democracy, politics, or power. This commitment to critical distancing, however, only compounds the already

difficult task of navigating the justificatory difficulty of both finding a foothold for critique and convincingly showing why others might trust enough to take a first step onto it. The challenge of demonstrating both the plausibility and the validity of radical democracy requires us, I think, to give more, not less, credence to ordinary understandings of the dynamics of life.

One place to start the task of developing an approach to democratic inquiry that is attentive to the ordinary is with Roland Barthes. Barthes found in Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of the sign an implicit vision of democracy, one that crystalizes the difference between theorizing democracy by reference to originary meanings and theorizing democracy ordinarily.[99] The core concept of Saussure's Copernican revolution in linguistics—the idea of the arbitrariness of the meaning of signs—endures and resonates across innumerable fields of critical social analysis.[100] Saussure's idea expresses a distinctive form of democratic imagination. His view of meaning turns on an opposition between conservatism and transformation. It affirms, on the one hand, that meaning has no natural, motivated basis but is instead an effect of social conventions. This is an argument against the authority of tradition. On the other hand, the conventions that Saussure exposes as arbitrary do reflect an odd kind of agreement, since they rely on the coercive force of community norms. Precisely because meaning is a social fact, no individual is empowered to change the meaning of this or that sound or word on a whim.

Saussure's view would lead us to an emphatic rejection of the search for the original meanings of words or concepts. He is deeply hostile to the idea that etymology throws proper light on how meaning ordinarily works. Etymology is essentially conservative, harking back to and remembering old meanings. Analogy, which Saussure holds to be quite central to "the normal functioning of language," is by contrast characterized by the forgetting of older forms, a forgetting necessary for the emergence of new meanings.[101] Saussure's preference for analogy over etymology, for synchronic imitation over diachronic derivation, is an expression of the political unconscious of his account of meaning. After Saussure, according to Barthes, "the space of the word is no longer that of an ancestry or a descent, it is that of a collaterality: the elements of language—its individuals—are no longer sons, but fellow citizens: language, in its very becoming, is no longer a lordship but a democracy: the rights and duties of words (which actually form their meaning) are limited by coexistence, the cohabitation of equal individuals."[102] If Saussure teaches us that tracking the derivation of words is not necessarily the best approach to apprehending the ordinary significance of concepts, then Barthes's reading of Saussure as a theorist of democracy helps us see why this quest is doubly flawed as a way of grasping the meaning of political ideas.[103] At its heart the quest for original meanings represents a turning away from the fields of conflict in which disputes over the meaning of concepts such as democracy actually take on their full significance.

The sense of attending to the situations in which issues of meaning actually arise is also, of course, the animating concern behind Ludwig Wittgenstein's assertion that for "a large class of cases—though not for all—the meaning of a word is its use in language."[104] The idea that meaning is use can be thought of as a democratic idea, too, at least in the sense that it would appear to grant at least some provisional validity to popular understandings of the meanings of words. Wittgenstein's most fundamental legacy is the idea "that we cannot purify our concepts of their embeddedness in human life and of their expression in natural languages without being left with only a shadow play of the grammar of serious judgment."[105] It follows that attempts to grasp the meaning of a concept like democracy need to attend to the forms of life in which the question of whether a situation is democratic really matters. This understanding of meaning would seem to lead us toward more than an analysis of the variable senses of the word "democracy" over time and space.[106] More precisely than that, it should lead to an analysis that attends closely to the practices associated with such usage in different contexts.[107]

If we follow the train of thought that connects Barthes to Wittgenstein, we can see the prevalence of the etymological gesture in theoretical accounts of democracy in a new light. It now appears as just one example of how the concept of democracy is used in practice. The claim that democracy has a proper meaning is closely related to the recurring tendency to condemn existing manifestations of democracy as illusory.[108] The argument that democratic arrangements are sham manifestations of a more authentic form is a long-standing feature of modern political thought on both the Left and the Right. Yet it is also a feature of routine political contention. Disappointment and discontent are ordinary features of political life, and in contexts where the registers and practices of democracy are at stake, they tend to be expressed with reference to the benchmark of the authentic will of the people. This reference to real democracy is the horizon of justification against which claims about the degree to which democracy is being eroded, honored, or circumvented appear as an ordinary aspect of democratic politics.[109]

There is, then, a certain sort of perfectionism built into the concept of democracy. It is in theory and in practice an unavoidably normative concept, a concept that combines values including autonomy, equality, freedom, justice, liberty, solidarity, all of which have close associations with the ideas of authenticity, legitimacy, and validity. Ideas like authenticity, legitimacy, and validity are, of course, looked on with considerable suspicion by some traditions of contemporary social thought. But those skeptical traditions are faced with the conundrum of trying to square the observable importance of such values to actual democratic political contestation with their own theoretical commitments that disallow any affirmation of those ideas. However, we should not misconstrue the dilemmas of "truthfulness" associated with democratic political life for epistemological problems of

certainty and doubt.[110] Contests around the authenticity, legitimacy, or validity of practices that claim to enact autonomy, equality, or justice are not matters of epistemological truth at all, whether to be affirmed or deconstructed. They are best thought of as indices of recurring predicaments associated with different modes of power, that is, of different modes of living in concert with others. Understood in this way, contested understandings of the meaning of democracy require us to explore a little further the sort of reasoning that should orient critical inquiry into democratic politics.

CHAPTER 2

Criteria for Democratic Inquiry

> Democracy can exist as thought and can be thought again, because it happened. Yet each time it occurs, the idea expands. Democracy changes its meaning, means more, as the actions of specific collectives bring it to life in a particular form, different, yet every time recognizable as itself.
>
> **—Susan Buck-Morss**

In this chapter I want to elaborate further on why thinking about democracy in an ordinary way, as suggested at the end of the previous chapter, should lead us away from supposing that there is a particular form of politics that is properly political, as if grasping this form would allow lesser forms to be characterized as postpolitical. In particular, I want to consider how best to understand the problem of deriving "context-transcending" principles from the specific situations in which the meanings of democratic politics are articulated. I take it for granted that this possibility can no longer be premised on the image of an empirically uneven, historically disjointed, but finally progressive realization of immanent universal norms.[1] Now, this affirmation might immediately plunge us into a series of debates in which the loss of the sure footing once apparently provided by universal principles is set against the specter of relativism. It is often asserted that surely we need some agreed upon principles in order to proceed with the tasks of critical judgment. I argue here that thinking about the mobility of criteria across contexts does not require us to come up with universal principles at all. To think that it does is to misunderstand what criteria do and how they work. The apparent problem of using concepts that lay claim to a certain sort of universal validity but that are instantiated only in particular contexts can easily ensnare us in a particular picture of what thinking with normative concepts involves. We need to get away from the idea that the critical task is one of coming up with general criteria for evaluation that are applicable across contexts and begin to think differently about how criteria actually work in the world.

Critical inquiry into democratic politics does not require an appeal to an ideal

theory that allows evaluations to be supported in advance by agreed upon principles.[2] To think that it does is to mistake what reasoned critique involves. My starting assumption here is that thinking critically requires the capacity to discriminate or, if you prefer, to exercise judgment. Judgment is often thought to be a matter of subsuming particular phenomena within frameworks of evaluation. But it also refers to the activity of separating, sifting, and making distinctions.[3] Prevalent paradigms of radical social theory are not very good at making distinctions, because they tend to subsume very different phenomena under some general category: governmentality, the state of exception, accumulation by dispossession, or neoliberalization. As already suggested, there is a default model of critique in which the primary task is assumed to be exposure and denaturalization, in a kind of politicized version of the high modernist trick of "laying bare the device." The approach I develop in this chapter starts from the proposition that concepts such as democracy do not have sharp edges and clear boundaries. This does not mean that they are necessarily vague or indeterminate. It does mean that the significance of democracy as an idea is not finally to be found in excavating the history of the idea of democracy. Its significance lies in its use, as already suggested, but more than this, I argue that it depends on its propensity to be used in new situations, to be projected into new contexts in the course of contentious debate about political futures. Thinking ordinarily about the concept of democracy is, according to the view I outline in this chapter, a necessary condition for any geographically sensitive form of democratic inquiry.

In this chapter I argue that the use of criteria depends on an appreciation of the nuances that allow the exemplary qualities of one situation to be applied to a new one. My argument ranges from Hannah Arendt's political theory, through philosophical debates about exemplarity, essentially contested concepts, and the ordinary, and on to recent attempts to bring an ethnographic sensibility to the task of theorizing about democracy. It recognizes that evaluation is an ordinary dimension of the way in which the world unfolds. In this understanding, the core problem when it comes to theorizing critically about democratic politics is less a matter of whose standards should apply in any particular case and more a question of how to think about the practice of judging.

Thinking in Examples

The temptation to think that the standards of evaluation derived from one time, place, or situation should be applied everywhere is derived from a particular model of judging. It is much the same model that underwrites the worry that not being able to apply universally applicable norms threatens to plunge us into the depths of relativism. In both cases, the model proposes that judging is a matter of applying a preconceived standard to a particular case, thereby subsuming that

case under a universal concept. An alternative understanding of what applying concepts involves turns on a transformed understanding of how criteria actually work. To begin the task of elaborating on this alternative understanding of criteria, it is helpful to consider the work of Hannah Arendt, for whom judgment is not best thought of in terms of organizing and subsuming particulars beneath criteria and rules. It is rather more about the ability to make distinctions.

Arendt is concerned with developing an account of critical practice that is equal to "the predicament of judging without being able to fall back upon the application of generally accepted rules."[4] She distinguishes between two sorts of judgment. The first involves "organizing and subsuming the individual and particular under the general and universal." The second sort of judgment arises when one is confronted with something never encountered before and for which there are therefore no standards. For Arendt, the lack of standards does not render judgment impossible. To presume that it does is to "tacitly assume that human beings can be expected to render judgments only if they possess standards, that the faculty of judgment is thus nothing more than the ability to assign individual cases to their correct and proper places within the general principles which are applicable to them and about which everyone is in agreement." In Arendt's view, the assumption that judgment cannot proceed without prior agreed upon standards negates the value of the idea of judgment itself: "The loss of standards, which does indeed define the modern world in its facticity and cannot be reversed by any sort of return to the good old days or by some arbitrary promulgation of new standards and values, is therefore a catastrophe in the moral world only if one assumes that people are incapable of judging things per se, that their faculty of judgment is inadequate for making original judgments, and that the most we can demand of it is the correct application of familiar rules derived from already established standards."[5] For Arendt, judging arises as a task only when clear standards are absent. One would think of this as an argument that threatens to plunge us toward the abyss of subjectivist relativism only if one clings to the individualistic presuppositions of the model of applying preexisting standards. In Arendt's account, the capacity for making original judgments is the very source of political life, which she understands as the art of living in common with others.

Arendt considers the faculty of judgment to be "the most political of man's mental abilities." By this she is referring to "the faculty that judges particulars without subsuming them under general rules which can be taught and learned until they grow into habits that can be replaced by other habits and rules."[6] We see in this statement a clear sense that judging is an exemplary form of action, in Arendt's understanding of that concept. Action, for Arendt, inheres in the capacity for beginning, where this means initiating something that "cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before."[7] And in turn, this capacity "to make room for one's own action" depends on the faculty of imagination.[8] In making this claim, Arendt suggests that Immanuel Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment

harbors an implicit political philosophy.[9] For Arendt, Kant's account of aesthetic judgment is relevant to political life not because she finds in it an image of political subjectivity modeled on the personal capacity to appreciate the experience of the sublime. In this respect, her interpretation of Kant differs from those provided by writers such as Gilles Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, and Jacques Rancière. In Arendt's interpretation, imagination is the faculty through which "enlarged thought" is cultivated, the means by which judging takes place against a horizon of "intercourse" with others.[10]

Arendt contrasts what Kant calls determinative judgment, which involves placing a particular case under a rule, as if from above, with aesthetic judgment (or reflective judgment), which works from the bottom up by seeking the appropriate universal for a singular experience. Imagination is, crucially, exercised in close relationship to particulars. It works not through abstraction but through reflective representation, that is, through "the ability to make present what is absent," an ability that transforms objects of the senses into objects that arouse pleasure or displeasure.[11] In this type of judgment, according to Arendt, particulars are not thought of as expressions of general rules or essences but rather are taken as examples.

By splicing together her interpretation of imagination, understood as the faculty that "makes room for action," with the idea of judging through the appreciation of examples, Arendt is not merely seeking to criticize the false universalism inherent in the idea that judging is a matter of detached evaluation. Her concern is to affirm that judgment is intimately tied up with questions of acting together in the world. For Arendt, judging is a crucial activity "in which sharing-the-world-with-others comes to pass." Judgment involves enlarging one's thinking with reference to others "in whose place" one thinks, the task of what she calls "representative thinking." It is in this sense that Arendt thinks of judgment as a political activity, insofar as it involves "the ability to see things not from one's own point of view but in the perspective of all those who happen to be present." Political thought, for Arendt, depends on representative thinking in this dual sense of imagination as "enlarged mentality" allied to the exercise of judgment.[12] In both respects, the strong emphasis is on forms of action that depend on and reconstitute shared worlds.

Arendt's understanding of judging, imagination, and representative thinking moves the discussion of the application of political concepts beyond the contrast between universally valid criteria and particularistic contexts. It allows us to recast the relevant contrast as one between two ways of thinking about universalizability. One of these involves subsuming particulars under a general law, rule, or principle. This is universality as impartiality. The other way of thinking about universality involves what Arendt calls "exemplary validity."[13] It does not involve grasping the essence of phenomena in order to wield this knowledge as an evaluative measure. It requires a degree of sensitivity toward what matters in the situation

under consideration and to how aspects of other situations might resonate with it. The logic of exemplarity is therefore central to political judgment for Arendt. And what she calls "thinking in examples" is above all a matter of choosing the company one wants to keep by relating to others through sharing judgments.[14] Rather than proposing a model of universal validity, Arendt therefore presents us with a picture of judgment as a matter of making "claims to validity," a practice that "can never extend further than the others in whose place the judging person has put himself for his considerations."[15] It stands, in short, for an understanding of universality as a striving toward inclusion.

Arendt's philosophy of action allows us to see that the problem of judgment is important in democratic theory not because we are worried about the loss of common standards. This is to get things the wrong way around. It is important because judgment is central to the sustenance of a common world. Arendt's concern is not with being able to exercise judgment authoritatively or prescriptively. Her concern is with thinking about judgment as a practice of living in the company of others.

My aim in this chapter is to make the problem of applying concepts developed in one context to new or different situations central to the task of theorizing democracy geographically. Arendt's account of judgment and thinking in examples provides a first step toward doing so. To further clarify the significance of her understanding of judgment, it is helpful to consider Linda Zerilli's feminist theory of democratic judgment, which is developed in close conversation with Arendt's work.[16] Whereas Arendt was concerned with the problem of the historical loss of standards in the wake of the calamities of mid-twentieth-century genocide, warfare, and totalitarianism, Zerilli picks up the theme of "natality" in Arendt's theory of action, understood as a beginning or initiation. In so doing, she more explicitly shifts the discussion of the problem of judgment toward the issue of engaging with new, novel, and unpredictable situations.[17]

Zerilli observes that discussions of judgment are often wrapped up in accounts of how to understand the values of different cultures or different identities.[18] There is, in fact, a close association between the model in which judgment is seen as a matter of subsuming particulars under universal concepts that are already agreed upon and the idea that one cannot comprehend or should not even presume to judge what is foreign or unfamiliar to one's own experience. The standard worry about relativism is associated, Zerilli suggests, with a worry that arises from mistaking the challenges of making judgments in first-order contexts of practical action for the ability to provide philosophically foolproof principles for such judgments in any context: "The real problem of judgment in the context of widespread value pluralism is not relativism, the inability to judge cultures and practices not our own, but the failure to take genuine account of the strangeness of what we are judging."[19] As with Arendt, Zerilli suggests that the idea that we are trapped within our own cultures bleeds too easily into a disavowal of the capacity of judging altogether.

Arendt's account of judgment and Zerilli's elaboration of this understanding in relation to issues of cultural pluralism help us to see that the recurrent problems associated with identifying "context-transcendent" principles of critique arise from a particular picture of judging. It is a picture in which the idea of judgment as the rule-governed application of agreed upon standards leads either to interminable worries about relativism or to the disavowal of judging in the face of various scruples about giving offense. This picture assumes that belonging to a particular culture or being located in a particular context is to find oneself enclosed within a tightly bounded conceptual schema of some sort.[20]

Moving beyond the contrast between purely idiosyncratic prejudice and a cognitive model of grasping and applying general criteria requires us to change our picture of the "logical geography" of critical reasoning. Echoing Arendt, Zerilli argues that judgment should be thought of as inherently political, not in the sense that it is necessarily about explicitly political topics or in the sense that it involves expressing one's own opinions, but in the sense that it involves addressing oneself to others. Rather than thinking of judgment as a practice in which a subject forecloses on engagement with others by presuming to know with certainty, judgment is better thought of as a moment in community making that revolves around making claims that invite contradiction, counterarguments, and disagreement. Zerilli proposes that thinking of judgment in this way, as a mode of agonistic sociability, requires us to think of the use of criteria as "fundamentally anticipatory rather than antecedent (justificatory) in structure."[21] In switching temporal registers in this way, Zerilli also refashions the image of the space across which the application of criteria is projected. Judgments are now thought of as claims addressed to others in anticipation of some sort of response, without either knowing in advance the form of such a response or being able to compel assent. Judgment is thereby reconfigured as a performative act of opening and sustaining social interaction, of affirming a shared world, rather than as a means of securing oneself against skepticism toward both the world and one's relations with those who share it.[22] We need now to consider further how this account of judgment can help us to better appreciate that democracy is a distinctive type of concept.

Democracy without Precedent

Arendt's account of action as the capacity to initiate something new has certain resemblances with themes in the thought of Jacques Derrida. For him, too, the possibility of acts such as forgiveness, responsibility, and hospitality depends on a kind of structural dehiscence that allows departures from what is given. The political significance of the similarities between themes in Arendt and Derrida is usually found in their shared interest in the paradoxes of foundation, acts of constitution, and ideas of popular sovereignty.[23] But Arendt's idea of reflective

judgment as a matter of "thinking in examples" is also resonant with the structure of exemplarity in philosophical reasoning that Derrida diagnoses across his writings.[24] The theme of exemplarity recurs across Derrida's engagement with various topics, including the legacies of Eurocentric models of universalism; the exceptionalism of claims of truth and democracy in the Greek and Roman tradition; concepts of justice and revolution in communism and Marxist thought; claims about the end of history and the telos of liberal democracy; philosophical accounts of violence and sovereignty, fraternity, and nationalism; post-9/11 terrorism; the meaning of democracy in Islam; and the politics of immigration in France. Exemplarity is, in short, a theme directly related to the political inflection of Derrida's work from the mid-1980s, extending arguments evident in earlier phases of the career of deconstruction. It a theme that works over a more "classical" deconstructive motif of the necessity for contextualization and the final inadequacy of any context in determining the meaning of an action, a concept, or a text.[25]

As with other themes in Derrida's work, exemplarity has a double logic. Examples are sometimes thought of as mere repetition, as one case in a series, or as just an instance of something more general. But examples also serve as exemplars—as norms or teleological models or as expressions of the universal. Derrida argues that any assertion or demonstration of the value of universality is linked to this double logic of exemplarity, whereby examples threaten to undermine the very value they are invoked to sustain. On the face of it, an example plays a merely illustrative function in the presentation of universal concepts, but this supplementary function turns out to be necessary and irreducible to the force of universal concepts. Concrete, specific examples, articulated in a particular idiom or place, make the thought of the universal possible, but as such they make the full purity of universality strictly impossible. Examples bring to mind the universal but stand in its place, deferring and displacing universality at its core.

The political relevance of this characteristic deconstructive trope is most evident in Derrida's account of "Democracy-to-Come." This idea names the inadequacy of any instance of democracy to its pure form. What Derrida refers to as the "*essential historicity of democracy*" implies an interminable analysis and self-criticism.[26] Derrida links the idea of democracy to the structure of "an infinite promise" on the one hand and on the other to "the determined, necessary, but also necessarily inadequate forms of what has to be measured against this promise."[27] In this sort of formulation, it can easily seem as if Derrida is proposing a criticism of the actuality of democracy by comparison with an ideal model. Democracy, he argues, is "the only word for a political regime that, because it carries conceptually the dimension of inadequation and the to-come, declares both its historicity and its perfectibility."[28] But this also makes it sound a little too much like we already know what democracy's perfect form might look like. It is here that the importance of the "to-come" in Derrida's formula lies. It refers us to a stronger sense of openness of the future, to what will come as a surprise in the form of an event that

has no model. The idea of democracy-to-come does not, then, refer to a horizon of anticipation or to the idea of "a future democracy in the future present," nor to "a regulative idea" or a "utopia."[29] It refers to forms of democracy that have no exact precedent.

As with Arendt, what is at stake in Derrida's account of democracy-to-come is not so much a model of critical evaluation. Rather, he is concerned with the very conditions of judgment. The sense of the "to-come" of what cannot be anticipated might suggest that democracy-to-come has entirely to do with deferral. Derrida, however, insists that it really implies an engaged response to urgent issues in which the absence or suspension of democracy is at stake: "This to-come prescribes pressing tasks and urgent negotiations, here and now."[30] In an iteration of a theme found elsewhere in Derrida's work, democracy-to-come is not the name for a regulative ideal or a messianic hope. It is, rather, one attempt to exemplify the aporetic structure that ties what is given together with what can be initiated. In short, Derrida's account of democracy-to-come can be read as one variant of the type of understanding of action also found in Arendt's work.

Although elaborated in different registers by Arendt and Derrida, the practice of "thinking in examples" that both theorists recommend rests on a shared way of judging the relations between existing arrangements and new situations. And in both cases, judging as exemplary thinking emerges as the medium of political community. It should be said that for both Arendt and Derrida the form of action exemplified by exercising judgment remains a rather refined activity. I propose that this way of understanding the application of concepts in new contexts should be thought of in a much more ordinary way. To develop this proposition, I argue that the idea of "essentially contested concepts" can play a vital part in further developing the ordinary approach to thinking about the meaning of democracy introduced at the end of chapter 1. Although often thought of as a rather staid and consensual tradition of thought, the strand of ordinary language philosophy from which this idea emerges allows us to develop an account of the exemplary structure of applying criteria that is actually more resolutely agonistic than those presented by Arendt and Derrida.

First coined by Walter Gallie, the term "essentially contested concepts" has become central to a series of debates in political theory and the social sciences.[31] The best known variation of the claim that political ideas are essentially contested is Steven Lukes's argument that the concept of power is "ineradicably evaluative and 'essentially contested.'"[32] Lukes shows that various theories of power are available to us and that scholars disagree about which one is best. The disputes he focuses on are therefore over different concepts of power. But it is not clear that these types of disputes really amount to different interpretations of how a more or less agreed upon idea should be applied. This issue is at the heart of the original sense of essentially contested concepts.[33]

If the idea of essentially contested concepts is not just about debates and dis-

agreements over concepts, then what it is about? Well, we might say that it is about the inherently fuzzy or blurred quality of concept use. For example, William Connolly's argument that the terms of political thought should be understood with reference to the idea of essentially contested concepts takes the form of a claim that any clear-cut distinction between concepts that are descriptive and concepts that are normative does not hold up.[34] For Connolly, concepts like democracy, power, or freedom are inherently evaluative in the way they are used in everyday life, and this quality is the source of conflicts about their meaning and use. Connolly suggests that political theorists should cleave more closely to this dimension of ordinary usage rather than assume that their task is to tidy it away and establish precise but neutral terms.

Both Lukes and Connolly are attracted by the idea of essentially contested concepts because it throws light on the worldliness of political concepts, on the ways in which disputes about these concepts matter to people. This aspect of the idea of essentially contested concepts is important to hold on to, certainly. But we need to return to Gallie's elaboration of the idea to better appreciate why it can help us think about democracy in an ordinary way.

It is important to note that Gallie does not make an argument about concepts in general but is interested in a particular class of concepts whose precise use cannot be decided on by appeal to theoretical criteria on their own. Gallie suggests that for certain concepts in aesthetics, political philosophy, and theology "there is no one clearly definable general use of any of them which can be set up as the correct or standard use." Essentially contested concepts are not subject to final clarification precisely because their varied usage does not derive from ambiguity, confusion, or even disagreement. These are not just concepts over which people disagree, as in Lukes's account of theories of power, but ones where the disagreement reveals something essential about a certain class of concepts. Gallie's examples of such concepts are art, democracy, social justice, and religion. He identifies a series of characteristics that all these concepts share. Among other things, an essentially contested concept must be "*appraisive* in the sense that it signifies or accredits some kind of valued achievement" and it "must be of an internally complex character, for all that its worth is attributed to it as a whole." In turn, explanation of the worth of such a concept must include a "reference to the respective contributions of its various parts or features."[35]

We can see why democracy might be a good example of the type of concept Gallie was trying to pin down. It is an internally complex, multifaceted concept whose meaning and value are subject to intense dispute; it can be described with reference to different ideas, such as the power of the majority, equal citizenship, or active participation, and these constituent elements can be ordered and related in different ways. Furthermore, and this is crucial, democracy is a concept whose use is never merely descriptive. To describe a situation as democratic is to ascribe to it certain characteristics that are worthy of praise or are rationally

justified. As Gallie observes, democracy is "*the* appraisive political concept *par excellence*."[36]

Gallie's discussion of essentially contested concepts is therefore concerned with situations in which deciding about the appropriate use of a concept is necessarily a matter of judgment in the same sense already discussed in this chapter. It is not an argument about the ambivalent meaning of concepts such as democracy. Although the idea of democracy has been denigrated for much of its history, it has for some time been a concept that is positively valued. It is now what we might call a "Hurrah" concept, as distinct from a "Boo-Hurrah" concept. Compromise, which carries both positive and negative connotations, is an example of the latter. The ability to compromise is sometimes thought of as a sign of commendable strength of character. At other times it is seen as a betrayal worthy of criticism and even shame.[37] By contrast, having once been a bad thing, democracy is now generally thought of as a good idea.[38] Herein lies a key aspect of its exemplary status as an essentially contested concept.

Internal complexity and appraisiveness, for Gallie, do not exhaust the characteristics that contribute to democracy's exemplary status as an essentially contested concept. The internal complexity of the concept of democracy is related to a further aspect of essentially contested concepts: "The accredited achievement must be of a kind that admits of considerable modification in the light of changing circumstances; and such modification cannot be prescribed or predicted in advance."[39] Democracy, it follows, can take on new meanings in changed circumstances. This aspect of an essentially contested concept is quite central to the reordering of our understanding of criteria of democratic inquiry.

Gallie's argument also contains elements that restrict the usefulness of the idea of essentially contested concepts, not least the idea that contestation revolves around "the derivation of any such concept from an original exemplar whose authority is acknowledged by all the contestant users of the concept."[40] The implication here is that the emergence of new meanings in changed circumstances necessarily has a teleological dynamic, whereby the original idea (e.g., of democracy or art) is ever more closely realized and more perfectly refined. But it is not necessary to follow Gallie in either the argument that essentially contested concepts refer to an original model or that the accretion of new meanings follows a teleological path of full realization. Democracy is the exemplary essentially contested concept because it is an inherently appraisive concept, one whose value depends on application to new contexts that existing meanings do not adequately cover.

The key lesson I take from Gallie's original discussion of essentially contested concepts is that the meaning of democracy arises as a problem when the concept is applied to new circumstances. The abiding significance of Gallie's account therefore lies in the connection he identifies between the variability and appraisiveness of concepts such as democracy or art and their status as concepts of application. Here I am following Thomas Wartenberg's interpretation of Gallie's

account as amounting to "a claim about how meanings of concepts evolve."[41] The idea of essentially contested concepts alerts us to a set of issues relating to "non-paradigmatic application," that is, the difficult problem of extending the use of concepts in order to classify borderline cases.[42] These issues are central to the task of thinking critically about democracy because they suggest that past uses of appraisive concepts cannot straightforwardly settle questions of whether and how to extend such concepts to new contexts. New contexts are likely to lack some of those features that have been previously taken to be defining for a given concept.

What is contested about essentially contested concepts, it is worth emphasizing, is not how to evaluate the concept itself. Concepts like democracy and art are generally thought of as positive things. What is contested is the range of application of such concepts and the composition and arrangement of their component parts. And we should think of contestability as a feature of worldly application.[43] The reason to think of democracy as an essentially contested concept, then, is because doing so draws into view the degree to which its value is intimately related to the problem of evaluating whether and how the concept can be extended to non-paradigmatic cases. And this means that democracy cannot finally be reduced to a single, determinative theoretical meaning.

As I have argued, both Arendt and Derrida can help us understand the type of reasoning involved in addressing the *iterability* of democratic principles and practices across new contexts. They do so by replacing an image of judging as the application of universal standards with an image of exemplary reasoning, in which the initiation of action without certain foundations is presented as a means of convening with others. The same structure of reasoning is central to the treatment of democracy as an essentially contested concept, where the contestability at issue is not a function of a general account of the undecidability of meaning but rather a specific feature of inherently appraisive concepts. The idea of essentially contested concepts also provides a more ordinary understanding of the sorts of formulations of action and judgment found in the work of Arendt and Derrida. I will now elaborate further on the precise sense of the "ordinary" involved in this claim about the ordinary qualities of using democratic criteria in the absence of foundations.

Affirmations of Ordinary Life

Gallie's account of essentially contested concepts is an elaboration of a strand of thought first developed by Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein proposes that grasping the meaning of concepts does not involve being able to exhaustively define the full range of necessary and sufficient conditions of application or being able to identify essential features. Concepts do not have fixed and clear boundaries that are waiting to be properly mapped out. Wittgenstein suggests instead that meaning is better understood through analogy to recognizing "family resemblances"—it is a

matter of apprehending similarities and relationships across cases.[44] Wittgenstein also compares the extension of a concept across a range of examples to the process of "spinning a thread by twisting fibre on fibre." He suggests that "the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres."[45] Wittgenstein therefore also invites us to think of applying a concept as a practice of judgment: it is both a practice, something done in relation to the continuing projects of life, and a matter of judgment, an action that is more than the automatic application of existing rules: "Our rules leave loop-holes open."[46]

Wittgenstein's case for thinking of concepts in terms of family resemblance is linked to the commitment to bring reflection on meaning closer to the ordinary situations in which questions of meaning arise. As Veena Das puts it, "For Wittgenstein, concepts acquire life in the give-and-take of ordinary life."[47] This simple-sounding invocation of the ordinary helps guard against the idea that questions of meaning are best thought of as matters of mere convention. To suppose that they are would be to miss the ways in which meanings matter to participants in a situation: meanings matter in a way that is not experienced as arbitrary or conventional at all.[48] In this section I connect the preceding account of judging as a form of exemplary reasoning to an account of what it means to approach democracy as an ordinary concept.

We might think of the idea of democracy as ordinary in two related senses. The first, and perhaps more straightforward, sense is indicated by John Dunn's claim that "in its essence, democracy is the political acceptance of the ordinary."[49] Here the idea of ordinariness takes on its meaning in contrast to privilege or superiority. It is the same sense, for example, in which Raymond Williams once affirmed that "culture is ordinary."[50] We might accordingly locate the modern idea of democracy within a much broader movement dubbed by Charles Taylor as "the affirmation of ordinary life," in which understandings of the good life are relocated away from ideals of higher pursuits accessible to a select few and located instead in the realm of life itself, in activities of labor, love, friendship, and community. In this move, questions of the good life are made accessible to the concerns, calculations, and competencies of everyone irrespective of their station in life.[51]

A second sense of the ordinariness of democracy builds on the more sociological version but deepens its significance for how we think about the vocation of critical theory of a democracy. It involves thinking of democracy along the lines suggested by Stanley Cavell's interpretation of Wittgenstein, specifically Cavell's account of how the meaning of concepts is extended to non-paradigmatic cases.

Cavell certainly has important things to say about democracy and political life.[52] But I am more interested here with drawing out the significance of aspects of his general account of criteria for the type of reasoning required to inquire into the emergence of democratic politics in new situations. Cavell provides important resources for thinking about the normativity of concepts, not least by suggesting

that we should think of normativity not in terms of prescriptive rules but rather as a capacity to adjust to changed circumstances.[53] Negotiating between a currently fashionable view of the nonconceptual attunement to practical environments while also avoiding the traps of highly intellectualist notions of conceptual intentionality, Cavell opens up for us an ordinary understanding of possessing concepts in terms of knowing how to "go on" in new situations.[54] Cavell reconfigures our idea of what criteria are and how they work.

Two aspects of Cavell's views on meaning are relevant to thinking of democracy as an ordinary concept. First, knowing the meaning of words is about knowing how to "go on" with them in new contexts. Second, and related to this, knowing how to "go on" does not depend on knowing criteria in an explicit way. Criteria are usually thought of as things that help us guard against the abyss of skeptical doubt, whether about the real world or other minds, or both. Cavell's description of criteria revolves around a consideration of one of the central figures in philosophical debates about meaning addressed by Wittgenstein, the theme of learning the meaning of a new word by learning how and when to use it appropriately. Laying claim to the spirit of Wittgenstein's thought, Cavell argues that "to know the meaning of a word, to have the concept titled by the word, is to be able to 'go on' with it in new contexts—ones we accept as correct for it: and you can do this without knowing, so to speak, the formula which determines the fresh occurrence, i.e., without being able to articulate the criteria in terms of which it is applied."[55] Embellishing on Cavell, Veena Das suggests that knowing how to "go on" with a concept does not involve knowing what it means so much as appreciating the significance of those "dispersed forms of action" that account for what it means and why it matters to those who are using it.[56]

The sort of claim that Cavell makes about the ability to "go on" without explicit criteria is often associated with a rather reassuring image in which people unconsciously know the meanings of a word because they belong to a shared community of values. But affirming the conventional qualities of meanings and actions does not necessarily require a consensual interpretation of implicitly agreed upon norms. It might just as well lead to a sense that meaning is inherently disputatious. However, even this view can easily lead to the idea that the task of critical theory is to expose the constructed qualities and the power relations that account for any shared frame of debate and disagreement over meanings. This view of meaning gets the idea of convention all wrong, setting up debates about how agreed upon meanings are secured through intuitive access to some sort of occluded background agreement and whether this is a mark of happy community or dark manipulation. The earlier discussion of essentially contested concepts and the "to-come" suggest that what we really need is an account that is focused on how meanings *change* by being applied to new cases. Cavell outlines just such an account in his vision of the ordinary experiences of being able to "go on" in new situations:

> We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing ensures that this projection will take place (in particular, not the grasping of universals nor the grasping of books of rules), just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humor and of significance and of fulfillment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation—all the whirl of organism that Wittgenstein calls "forms of life."[57]

The claim here is that using words involves the projection of established meanings to new contexts, or what I previously called the application to new cases. As already noted, one might well read Cavell's account as suggesting that this capacity for projection is secured not by hard and fast rules but by the conventions of shared culture. This is what Cavell's reference to "forms of life" perhaps brings to mind. But the image of forms of life is not something to fall back on in order to explain the ways in which learning of concepts works. Cavell's point is that *nothing* guarantees that projecting meanings into new contexts will come off successfully, neither grasping universal principles or an appeal to conventional meaning. It is the very possibility of community that Cavell is seeking to account for, in much the same way that Arendt is in her account of judgment as a form of consorting with others. Cavell's reference to the presence of a like-minded community is therefore not meant to substitute a foundation of shared community norms for a foundation in rational rule following. There is nothing so reassuring about Cavell's image. This vision of what makes it possible "on the whole" to carry on with shared projects is, according to Cavell, "as simple as it is difficult, and as difficult as it is (because it is) terrifying."[58]

Cavell's account of the application of criteria is certainly open to a recuperative "political" interpretation. In this interpretation, the alternative to thinking of questions of meaning as applying fixed criteria or faithfully following rules would be to adopt the mirror image of this idea, according to which meaning is finally dependent on the decisionistic imposition of closure, Humpty Dumpty style.[59] But this interpretation places the emphasis on the idea that there are no criteria to establish meanings, in the sense that questions of usage and application are wholly arbitrary, and thus that they are matters of pure will.[60] Against this interpretation, Cavell invites us to think differently about the problem of criteria, not to imagine that we can do away with the problem of criteria altogether. To embrace the standard interpretation of the arbitrariness of meaning is, for Cavell, to shrink away from the shared world in which questions of meaning arise as problems in the first place. Forms of life are not the consoling substitute for certainty that allow one to remain secure about the ability to decide finally on the meaning and value

of things. For Cavell, they are the scenes to which we are referred in order to see what is really at stake when matters of meaning arise as problematic. In Cavell's invocations of Wittgenstein, the emphasis is always on forms of *life*, which distinguishes his account from a conventionalist or contractual image that would place the emphasis on *forms* of life.[61] The emphasis underscores the importance, for example, of scenes of distress, pain, pity, and suffering as the occasions when problems of criteria arise, occasions that require more than knowing how to apply rules and that call for some form of acknowledgement.[62]

Cavell's account of criteria provides an understanding of how concept use works that is deeply democratic in its imagination. It stands in contrast to the interpretation of Wittgenstein's account of rule following and language games popularized by Richard Rorty, for whom the lesson of meanings being referred to forms of life is that there is a range of issues about which reason cannot be of much help. Rorty's account depends on an image of communities as enclosed and all enveloping.[63] Cavell's view, by contrast, depends on the image of communities as fragile achievements, which therefore are open to the future. For Cavell, making use of concepts works not by reference to a preexisting community of established meanings but through the projection of examples into new contexts in which something has been unsettled. In turn, and not unlike Arendt's vision of judgment, this view invites us to think of the use of concepts as a way of making claims—of asserting commitments and responsibilities that project the possibility of both "geniality" and "sociality" without prior guarantees of felicitous outcomes.[64] And it is important to underscore that the suggestion that concept use is a matter of knowing how to "go on" with words and actions in new contexts is, for Cavell, not a matter of dramatic willfulness. It is a feature of ordinary usage.[65] Again, it is possible to see in this a reassuring appeal to the comforts of a community. But the emphasis in Cavell's work is on the sense in which being able to "go on" with action always involves a claim to community that might well be queried, generate dispute, or simply fail.

If we follow Cavell, the idea of concept use as always a matter of finding the right nuance for the context one finds oneself in has a clear implication that ordinary usage is, as he puts it, "normative for what can be said."[66] We should not think that this is a reassertion of the idea that ordinary contexts are normative in the sense of providing hard-and-fast rules for future application. These contexts might be better thought of as providing possible examples for the drawing of analogies and the making of claims. More fundamentally, Cavell is asserting that when questions arise explicitly about appropriate application, it is because something unusual is going on, because something has become problematic. And the becoming problematic of situations is an ordinary aspect of forms of life, rather than being reserved for events of catastrophe or emergency.[67]

As I have already suggested, Cavell's work is relevant here not just because it provides an account of what it is to apply concepts but also precisely because it

provides a democratic account of this issue.[68] Cavell's account of criteria revolves around the question of what it means to be in agreement with others. His answer is that this is not a matter of arriving at a consensus, nor is it a matter of establishing a structure of rules. It is more like being attuned to others.[69] Cavell, like Arendt and Derrida, affirms that judgment is not merely a matter of applying standards to determine whether something satisfies preestablished criteria. Using criteria involves being able to spot the difference that makes an action the specific type of action that it is and being able to spot this difference when called on to do so in contexts when being able to tell what an action is really matters: "In judging (saying something true or false) you have to be able or willing to judge a contraction of the face as a wince, to recognize a smile as forced, to find a slap on the forehead to express the overcoming of stupidity by insight, a fist to the heart to express the overcoming of stiff-neckedness by contrition, a tone of voice to be that of assertion."[70] Cavell brings into view the degree to which questions of meaning, once they are approached in terms of practices of application, extension, and projection, always raise normative questions—questions of authority, community, and responsibility. And to the degree that it is concerned with relations of assent and dissent and the arrogation of voice in claims to speak for the community to which one asserts affinity, Cavell's image of being able to project meaning into new situations provides a resolutely agonistic understanding of the dynamics of joint action.

Cavell's account of criteria is central to linking the idea of democracy as an ordinarily appraisive concept to the vocation of critical inquiry. Understanding the meaning of universal terms is not a matter of grasping a definition of necessary conditions and then successfully applying it. That much we can learn from Derrida, or from Wittgenstein. Concepts such as democracy, justice, or art all involve too many elements to enable the clear-cut definition that this image of concept use requires. Gallie helps us grasp that what is at stake in this difficulty is not a matter of ambivalence or undecidability—it's the appraisive qualities of such concepts. Which is to say, of course, that the difficulty is not really an internal feature of the concepts themselves but a feature of the types of context in which their application becomes a live issue. Understanding a concept is a matter of being able to use it, that is, being able to apply a term in a given context and, crucially, being able to give reasons for doing so.

James Tully, another thinker who draws on Wittgenstein, suggests that understanding a term is a matter of "being able to give reasons why it should or should not be used in a particular case, either to provoke or to respond to a dispute, being able to see the strength of the reasons given against this use by one's interlocutors, and then being able to give further reasons, and so on." The reasons offered might well appeal to general models or universal principles, or to examples, but it is the activity of giving reasons that is worth emphasizing. Cavell helps us see that invoking this or that criterion is always likely to be a contentious action, one that invites dissent because the stakes are so high, pertaining as they do to matters

of belonging, community, and identification. More so than Cavell, Tully draws out the agonistic energies involved in the process of understanding concepts and applying criteria. Giving reasons for applying a concept in a new context is "done by describing examples with similar or related aspects, drawing analogies or disanalogies of various kinds, finding precedents, exchanging narratives and redescriptions, drawing attention to intermediate cases so one can pass easily from the familiar to the unfamiliar cases and see the similarities among them; thereby being both conventional and creative in the use of the criteria that hold our normative vocabulary in place."[71] In Tully's account, as in Cavell's, agonistic engagement goes alongside giving reasons, rather than the two practices being opposed as stark opposites—giving reasons is, in a sense, both an index and medium of agonistic engagement.

In this section, in arguing that democracy needs to be thought of as an ordinary idea, I have drawn on the idea of democracy as an essentially contested concept. Its meaning is certainly a matter of dispute and disagreement. But democracy is also a particular type of concept, one with an irreducibly normative dimension to it. The contested quality of democracy is neither a sign of confusion, nor of ambiguity, nor even just disagreement. Nor is the contested quality of concepts such as democracy a function of an inherent undecidability or openness of language. It follows, rather, from the fact that affirming one version of democracy has practical consequences. The reason to argue that the concept of democracy is essentially contested is to affirm the sense that democratic politics is practically oriented by reference to claims regarding "Hurrah" words like "the common good," "equality," "fairness," "freedom," and "justice." Democracy is not, we have seen, a static concept. Its significance certainly cannot be secured by alighting on robustly exact definitions of the political, as if there were such a thing. Grasping the type of concept that democracy is does not require us to recall a forgotten or covered-over meaning. And we have seen that thinking of democracy as essentially contested is, to switch theoretical registers back to Derrida for a moment, to think in terms of a supplementary logic of democratization. It implies that new attributes can and do become attached to democracy in the ongoing dynamic of contestation about the relationship between its different values and their practical enactment.

Democracy as a Form of Life

I have used the theme of essentially contested concepts to address the problem of theorizing the contextual variability of normative concepts that lay claim to an element of universality. I have suggested that this problem requires us to adjust our understanding of what criteria are and how they operate in practice. The challenge of acknowledging both the provincialism of theoretical traditions and the syncretism of distinct configurations of political practice requires us, I have

further argued, to think of democracy as *ordinary*, where this refers to a certain style of reasoning. This is a style that seeks to be responsive to situations from which novel and innovative variations of democratic practice emerge. In the rest of this chapter I elaborate on some of the commitments associated with this style of reasoning by moving from the rather philosophical tenor of the chapter so far, turning instead to considerations of critical thought that provide a thicker social scientific imagination of these same issues.

The challenge of responding to new forms of political life has been crystalized since the end of the Cold War by questions of whether the norms of Western, liberal, representative electoral democracy can and should be practically applied in non-Western contexts and deployed as normative benchmarks of critical analysis.[72] At the same time, experiments in extending and deepening established democratic practices have also challenged the norms of liberal democracy.[73] As the hegemony of liberal democracy has been extended it has also been challenged and resisted. The proliferation of both more-than-liberal and less-than-liberal forms of democracy generates a conceptual problem: the acknowledgment at an analytical level that democracy is a highly variable social form seems to undermine any attempt to assess and evaluate the democratic status of specific adjectival versions.[74] As the concept is stretched to include all sorts of things, the worry arises that it risks losing its force both descriptively and normatively: "analytical differentiation" threatens to weaken the "conceptual validity" of the core idea.

We have already seen how one response to this sort of worry is to adjust our picture of what critical reasoning about democratic politics ordinarily involves. The purpose of following the path outlined so far in this chapter is to fundamentally shift the terms for inquiry into democratic politics. The ways in which we reason about democracy matter because they shape the things we look for in our inquiries, as well as the ways in which we interpret the things that present themselves in those inquiries. I want here to specify further the ordinary spirit of democratic inquiry that follows from the account of criteria, judgment, and essentially contested concepts outlined so far.

A different, more pragmatic response to the worry about the descriptively capacious and normatively slippery qualities of the idea of democracy is to think in terms of a threshold that defines democracy, such as free and fair contested elections, full suffrage, and the rule of law. In this spirit, Giovanni Sartori proposes a two-step formula for investigating democracy: start by asking whether a country is democratic or not, and if it is, then ask just how democratic it is. The approach depends on the premise that "what makes democracy possible should not be mixed up with what makes democracy more democratic."[75] Sartori's formula has a clear analytical sequence. First comes an either/or judgment, and then comes an evaluation of degrees of democracy.[76] The formula has been refined to theorize the relationship between more formal aspects of democracy, like free and fair electoral representation, which might be thought of as necessary to defining

the threshold level, and the deepening of democracy through nonelectoral forms of representation and participation.[77]

Discussions about adjectival democracy and thresholds of democracy seek to revise a paradigm of social inquiry that relies on a taken-for-granted model of comparative analysis. Particular places are taken as paradigms and then the degree to which other places succeed or fail to emulate the experience of those places is assessed.[78] Such a form of analysis too readily presumes that all the known variants of democratic politics have already occurred in a small number of places. As Jack Goody observes, this form of comparative epistemology makes European and North American traditions "the guardians of certain prized institutions." Along with such values as humanism and individualism, democracy is often viewed as "a universal value of which the contemporary western world is the primary custodian and the only model."[79] Goody argues that democracy is a value that can be seen in many societies, most often manifested in opposition to authoritarian modes of rule. Amartya Sen has likewise argued that democracy is a genuinely universal concept, on the grounds that it has global sources.[80] He too opposes the claim that democracy has uniquely Western origins and that certain conditions are necessarily required for democracy to flourish. Sen defines democracy in terms of a broad range of practices of public argument: "Democracy is intimately connected with public discussion and interactive reasoning."[81]

Sen's capacious democratic universalism emphasizes the resemblances between various practices of public reasoning. It avoids the trap of presuming that democracy means completely different things in different places or that democratic norms are not appropriate for certain places. But there is a stronger argument to be made here, one that shifts the emphasis away from simply finding analogies of democratic procedures across space and time and toward thinking more specifically about conflict and struggle as the medium of democracy's universalization.[82] In the course of situated political conflict, actors use concepts such as democracy and associated ideas strategically. This includes sometimes appealing to Western traditions in the process of trying to mobilize support or delegitimize opponents.[83] We should always keep in mind that democracy is a product of struggle.[84] According to Pierre Rosanvallon, this fact implies that the presumption that democracy belongs originally and normatively to the West needs to be set aside once and for all. The route to doing so, he suggests, lies in doing without the idea of self-enclosed cultures that underwrite what he calls a "*universalism of closed systems*." Rosanvallon proposes instead thinking in terms of "*an open universalism grounded in competing experience*."[85] Such a way of thinking would involve a project of comparing democratic experiences in order to inform an "experimental universalism."

Recalling the ways in which democracy emerges out of conflict, dispute, and struggle helps us better pinpoint the aspects of political concepts that allow them to travel across contexts. It suggests not only that concepts of democracy are con-

tested in the way already described but that they are particularly effective means for carrying on contestation of certain sorts. In this spirit, John Dunn has argued that the resonant force of democracy as an idea and practice through time and across space lies in "the horizon of identification it has held out to so very many and the basis it has offered them for discrediting and denouncing their immediate enemies."[86] For Dunn, the meaning of democracy is not just broad and encompassing as well as variable. More precisely, the meaning of democracy is embedded in the grammar of making distinctions and drawing dividing lines in order to mobilize, organize, persuade, and petition.

Thinking of democracy as a concept whose meaning emerges from situations of conflict should help us deflate the comparativist worry that the differentiation of democratic forms somehow undermines the possibility of assessment. We should by now be able to see that the worry arises from a particular picture of judging and applying criteria. But it also arises from a particular picture of the conditions of democratic politics. Here we can turn to Charles Tilly, who suggests that theories of democratization are characterized by different temporal imaginations. Historians have tended to focus on long timescales, concentrating on the role of collective popular mobilization in explaining differential patterns of democratization. By contrast, political science and international relations, closely articulated with the geopolitics of good governance and democratization, have focused on shorter timescales shaped by a concern for developing successful programs of democratic transition and consolidation. Tilly suggests that there are two different images at work across these debates—one in which democracy is like an oilfield and one in which democracy is like a garden: "An oilfield, the specific product of millennial history, conforms to regularities strong enough that petrogeologists can spot likely untapped deposits or explain how an oil well works. Yet experts cannot produce a new oilfield at will wherever they want. The presence of oilfields depends on long, long conjunctions of circumstances that appear rarely in history, and are little amenable to human manipulation." In contrast, Tilly suggests, "Gardens are different. They will not flourish everywhere, but given adequate soil, sun, and precipitation, many different sorts of gardens grow in a variety of environments."[87]

At one level, Tilly's metaphorical flourishes are meant to dramatize the ways in which different temporal imaginations determine contrasting understandings of how far democracy is susceptible to deliberate promotion. His more fundamental point is that the assumption that democracy should be theorized in relation to the problem of establishing necessary and sufficient conditions might not offer the best way to proceed with comparative analysis in the first place. And the reason is because democracy does not resemble either an oilfield or a garden. It is, rather, like a lake:

> A lake—a large inland body of water—can come into being because a mountain stream feeds into a naturally existing basin, because someone or something dams

> up the outlet of a large river, because a glacier melts, because an earthquake isolates a segment of the ocean from the main body of water, because people deliberately dig an enormous hole and channel nearby watersheds into it, or for a number of other reasons. Once it exists, nevertheless, a lake nurtures characteristic ecosystems and maintains characteristic relations with its surroundings, so much so that limnologists have built a scientific specialty around the study of those regularities. Democracy behaves like a lake: although it has distinguishing properties and a logic of its own, it forms in a variety of ways, each of which retains traces of its singular history in the details of its current operation.[88]

Tilly's point in using the analogy of lake formation is not just that democracy has no single origin, no essential form or model. The variability that he affirms is not meant to render general concepts redundant. It is intended to shift our sense of how such concepts work. It is, after all, still possible to talk about lakes—or democracy—as a class without having a cast-iron set of principles that each case must accord to. The idea that democracy might be best conceptualized through the analogy of lake formation is tied closely to Tilly's own appreciation for how the different trajectories taken by democratic politics are rooted in the dynamics of political contention.[89] The meaning of democracy—in the sense of what democracy is meant to be good for—emerges as an issue when matters of definition and assessment are at stake in relation to situated configurations of authority and dissent, domination and resistance, exploitation and solidarity. This emergent aspect ensures that democracy has no proper meaning, only exemplary forms. In the next section I will suggest that the emergent dynamic of the meaning of democracy requires us to adjust our picture of theorizing so that we might attend more sensitively to the resistances and impasses, hopes and expectations, out of which democratic politics arises.

Theorizing Democracy Geographically

We have traveled from a discussion of judgment and thinking in examples through an account of the essentially contested and ordinary quality of concepts of democracy to a consideration of how these issues of concept use are related to the worldly challenge of thinking in nonethnocentric ways about democracy as a global phenomenon. I want now to draw together these strands of thought, all of which revolve around the theme of how criteria work in the world, in order to outline a form of geographically sensitive inquiry that focuses on democracy as a *contextually enacted* and *ethnographically emergent* phenomenon.

One of my reference points for imagining a form of inquiry into democracy that is sensitive to postcolonial critiques of falsely universalizing assumptions but is also able to focus on the inherently appraisive dimensions of all discussions of

democracy is Michael Saward's account of the enactment of democracy. Saward's discussion begins from the observable proliferation of democratic innovations as well as the geographical spread of democratic practices across the world. His strong claim is that thinking about the enactment of democracy is well attuned to the fact that democracy "can be practiced in radically different, including unconventional, ways." He recommends such an approach because it can contribute to the "positive decoupling of 'democracy' from 'the West.'"[90]

Saward's account of the enactment of democracy depends on a distinction between three aspects of democratic politics: democratic principles, democratic devices, and sequencing. First, the principles associated with democracy need to be thought of in a particular way: "Democratic principles are primarily things that we *do* rather than rights or statuses that are conferred."[91] This is the core claim of Saward's argument that democracy's variability can be theorized via the idea of enactment.

The idea of enactment that Saward uses is drawn from Judith Butler's theory of performativity.[92] Enactment, in this sense, refers to the constitutive possibility that meanings can be transferred across contexts.[93] More fundamentally, from this perspective the transferability of meanings ruins any appearance of an original source of meaning. This notion is indebted to Derrida's account of the "logic of supplement," the deconstructive principle whereby features that seem at first to be a secondary, unnecessary, or superfluous addition to an apparently authentic and natural form are shown to be necessary and essential to it—writing to speech, in Derrida's most famous example, or translation to original, or perhaps representative elections to direct democracy.[94] So to say that democracy is enacted implies the structural possibility that it could be repeated or re-presented in new contexts that add a novel slant to its full significance, a potential that must be accounted for in any discussion of its realizations. Butler's own iteration of this theme of the iterability of meaning in her social theory of performativity shifts attention away from the task of prying open authoritative discourses with tools that demonstrate the impossibility of the pure presence of authoritative meaning. Instead, she turns toward the analysis of the practices that disrupt norms by mobilizing their constitutive instability.

The notion of the enactment of democracy, then, is not just an assertion that democratic ideals are necessarily performed in various contexts. It involves the stronger implication that their performance in any one context involves the transformative reiteration of meanings and actions. Saward's invocation of the idea of enactment therefore supposes a practical interest in how the potential for democratic principles to be combined in new ways and acquire new meanings plays out in the world.

Saward argues that democratic principles are enacted through various devices. These devices include not only elections, deliberative polls, referenda, and judicial review but also forms of civil society activism and protest.[95] In short, democratic

principles are practiced through diverse forms of action.[96] In this account, the vocabulary of performatives, acts, and enactments is not simply meant to emphasize contingency as an ontological condition. It is informed by a sense that the meaning of political practices is unavoidably interpretative, not only as a matter of external analysis but internally, as a condition of how these practices take on their meaning in the world.

The point of Saward's argument is not, then, merely that there are a number of democratic principles and that these are enacted through various devices. The third aspect of his account is concerned with how the practical enactment of democratic politics also involves a process of sequencing, of tying principles and devices together into temporal relations of agenda setting, debate and discussion, authorization, decision, implementation, review, and accountability. Rather than simply assuming in advance the value of, for example, elections or deliberative consultation, Saward's approach raises the question of just how practices of voting or of talking enact certain democratic values depending on the contexts in which these practices acquire their significance for the actors bound into them. The significance of democratic values is not therefore intrinsic to particular devices. It is emergent from the politics of contestation that any particular sequencing of devices helps to configure.

Saward's account of the enactment of democracy puts a strong emphasis on democracy as a relational field of claims and counterclaims. The enactment perspective provides helpful analytical resources for thinking about how new forms of political action emerge from, engage with, and transform existing configurations of political power. It affirms that the crucial dynamic behind the translation and combination of principles and devices involves practices of claims-making, compromising, concession, bargaining, and mobilization. The values enacted through the contingent articulation of principles, devices, and sequences—the ways in which interests are represented, conflicts resolved, participation practiced, accountability enforced—are likely to vary across different contexts. Democracy is related to various principles, including political equality, inclusion, expressive freedom, and transparency. Democracy includes practices of talking, choosing, revising, being obliged, being respected, having a say, being listened to, making decisions, being held accountable, taking responsibility. And it combines in different ways various institutional devices for ensuring the rule of law, transparency, majority rule, minority rights, equal representation, and other values.

Saward's interpretative theory of the enactment of democracy takes the contingency of existing arrangements not as a lever for disobliging or denaturalizing critique but as the occasion for outlining a mode of inquiry into how this contingency is shaped by the dynamics of political action. In this emphasis on the variable formation of democratic politics there is, I think, a significant affinity between Saward's interpretative democratic theory and the anthropology of democracy proposed by Julia Paley. The link is suggested by Paley's own foundational state-

ment that democracy "is not a single condition that countries do or do not have, but rather a set of processes unevenly enacted over time."[97] Paley makes the case for thinking about the emergent dynamics through which democratic practices are translated and given new meanings and from which new, innovative aspects of democracy are developed.[98] In so doing, she places these dynamics squarely within the worldly politics of conflicts against authoritarianism, messy democratic transitions, the contested politics of reconciliation and redress, and the unanticipated consequences of marketization, privatization, and consumerism.

Paley's concern is primarily with understanding democracy in the context of transitions from authoritarian rule. Her own research has explored the meanings of political accountability in postdictatorship Chile. She argues that the imperatives of policy makers and elected politicians in that context were to satisfy the desires of citizens. These were in turn shaped both by citizens' experiences and expectations of life under an authoritarian dictatorship and by the specific form of transition to democracy in Chile.[99] This example suggests that the idea that non-Western patterns of democratization are shaped by a greater concern with "substantive" issues of inequality and redistribution of resources should not be taken for granted.[100] The formal or procedural dimensions of democracy, such as the rule of law and free and fair elections, are likely to be a fundamental dimension of the meaning of democracy in such contexts, because these aspects are central to the public performance of relationships of dignity, respect, and recognition between rulers and citizens.

The most significant contribution of Paley's agenda for an anthropology of democracy is the assertion that the meaning of democracy is ethnographically emergent: "The use of the term 'democracy' occurs neither alone, nor steadily, nor completely; it is, rather, ethnographically emergent. Therefore we must ask: Whose term is it? What does its usage in any particular case signify? Where does the term arise and where not?"[101] Approaching democracy in this spirit involves more than pursuing a meaning-centered analysis. It entails sensitivity toward why it is that democracy matters in particular situations: "An analysis of democracy benefits from attention to the intersection of meaning and practice—what is done with *meaning*, how politics operate."[102]

The idea of democracy as ethnographically emergent places particular emphasis on understanding the political experiences out of which democracy's contested meanings emerge. There are two dimensions to this emphasis. First, Paley suggests that thinking of democracy as ethnographically emergent "impels us to look more closely at the strategic deployment of the term democracy."[103] Contestations of the meanings of democracy are related to the uses to which the idea can be put in furthering certain interests, in building alliances, or in outmaneuvering opponents. As already suggested, we should emphasize not the contested qualities of democracy per se so much as the parts played by democratic concepts as means of ongoing contestation.[104] Paley's agenda therefore helps us understand why certain

concepts and practices of democracy travel readily into new contexts. If we think of democratic concepts and practices as means of contestation, then we can see that they travel not so much as ideals to be emulated but as ideals that can be called on in the midst of political conflict.

The second dimension of Paley's account of emergent democratization is the suggestion that there is a path-dependent relationship between the forms of conflict through which democratic transitions are generated and negotiated and the forms of democratic contention that follow formal transitions to democracy: "what comes before transitions to democracy shapes what comes after them."[105] The pacts, negotiations, compromises, silences, and forms of violence through which democratic regimes are established shape the subsequent trajectories of democratic politics. Not the least significant implication of this perspective is that democratic inquiry must involve attending to the particular harms, injustices, or sources of indignation that generate political contention in a specifically democratic register.

The two dimensions of what we might call democratic emergence that Paley identifies throw a different light on a seemingly intractable paradox, identified by Albert Hirschman, that lies at the heart of existing democratic politics in any context. Historically, pluralistic democracies tend to emerge as forms of grudging compromise, "because various groups who had been at each other's throats for a prolonged period had to recognize their mutual inability to achieve dominance." At the same time, the normative claim made in the democratic present, as it were, is that the legitimacy of democracy depends on free and open opinion-forming deliberation between equal participants.[106] The disjuncture between historical process and contemporary justification should not lead us to disavow those claims to legitimacy. It should, at the very least, remind us of the irreducibly political character of any and all democratic practice, however agreeable it may appear. But more than that, it should encourage us to avoid the temptation of simply embracing the image of democratic politics as beset by various "paradoxes," a recurring theme in radical theories of democracy. One would find the association of democratic legitimacy with values such as civil peace, material well-being, or security, for example, to be paradoxical or contradictory only if one continued to insist on an abstract and constricted model of popular sovereignty and political obligation.[107] Democratic politics emerges as a resolution of sorts to experiences of dispossession, slavery, or war and as a response to anticipations of emancipation, redress, reconciliation, or security. Thinking of democracy as emergent from these forms of experience and their attendant conflicts involves, I suggest, attending to the way in which the essential contest*ability* of democracy is in itself an aspect of these experiences and conflicts.

In recommending that we should think about democracy ethnographically, I do not mean to suggest that there is only one, methodologically cherished form of immersive fieldwork through which democracy can be properly investigated. In-

stead I propose that democracy should be thought of as an ordinary phenomenon embedded in more or less extended forms of life, so that interpreting its variable meanings requires a sensitivity to contextual "thickness."[108] From different disciplinary perspectives, both Saward and Paley ascribe importance to attending to what things mean from the inside for participants engaged in political action. The idea of thinking of democracy as both contextually enacted and ethnographically emergent therefore implies not just attending to the multiple meanings of democracy as a word. It directs our attention to the situated disputes and the structures of expectations that shape particular formations of political contestation.[109]

Democracy Is Ordinary

By tracing debates in political theory, philosophy, social theory, and social science, I have sought in this chapter to address the recurring problem of squaring the universal register of democratic discourse with the historically and geographically variable shapes taken by democratic politics. We saw in chapter 1 that this problem is central to the justificatory dilemmas that have shaped various traditions of radical democratic theory. I have approached this problem in the spirit proposed by Pierre Rosanvallon, seeking to reframe democracy's universalism not as a thesis to be confirmed or refuted but as a difficulty to be explored. Exploring this difficulty requires us to rethink our model of concept formation and concept use. We should resist the temptation to draw firm boundaries around political concepts, as if we might use them to measure the degree to which phenomena accord to these definitions. I have instead proposed a way of thinking about concept formation that is sensitive to the affirmations of ordinary life that are at the core of both grand and mundane expressions of agonistic conflict.

The problem of justifying the use of context-transcending criteria of evaluation is inherent to the very practice of democracy. Democracy is an emergent practice whose very meaning is not just essentially contested in an empirically observable way but, more strongly, whose meaning and value lie in its essential contest*ability*. I have argued that this contested quality is a function of the unavoidably appraisive dimensions of ideas about democracy.

My treatments of issues of judgment, thinking in examples, essentially contested concepts, and ordinary appreciation of criteria suggest that critical attention does not need to be focused on assertions of ontological contingency or interpretative undecidability. Rather, critical attention should be focused on understanding how normative issues arise in situations in which existing understandings of political life are interpreted in new ways. My purpose in the rest of this book is not to apply this way of thinking through empirical analysis. My aim is, rather, to engage with different traditions of political thought with an eye toward finding resources for further elaborating on the idea that democracy is an

emergent form of political life—a form of politics that arises in problematic situations of conflict and that is shaped by experiences of subordination, humiliation, and exploitation. In part 2, "Rationalities of the Political," I consider the ways in which these issues are presented in a range of traditions of thought that tend to deduce the possible emergence of democratic energies from strongly ontological interpretations of the concept of the political. Recourse to an ontological register means that the political always ends up being rendered in an image that is already known in advance. In part 3, "Phenomenologies of Injustice," I discuss the ways in which the ethnographic disposition toward appreciating the ordinary qualities of democracy that I have discussed in this chapter can also be found to be at work in traditions of critical theory that are often thought of as being much more normative, perhaps even prescriptive, in their inclinations. I will argue that it is in those traditions of thought, concerned with questions of action and rationality, that the resources for further inquiry into situated senses of injustice that shape the emergence and enactment of democratic politics can be found.

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PART 2

Rationalities of the Political

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CHAPTER 3

The Ontological Need

> As I understand it, "the political" is at once *a field* and *a project*. As a field, it designates the site where the multiple threads of the lives of men and women come together, what allows all of their activities and discourses to be understood in an overall framework. It exists in virtue of the fact that there exists a "society" acknowledged by its members as a whole that affords meaningfulness to its constituent parts. As a project, the political means the process whereby a human collectivity, which is never to be understood as a simple "population," progressively takes on the face of an actual community. It is, rather, constituted by an always contentious process whereby the explicit or implicit rules of what they can share and accomplish in common—rules which give a form to the life of the polity—are elaborated.
>
> **—Pierre Rosanvallon**

Discerning the Political

Over the next three chapters I critically engage with a set of intellectual traditions that present strongly ontological interpretations of the concept of the political. I argue that ontologies of the political often define democracy in a rather one-sided way, reserving authentic democratic action for the disruption of identities, hegemonies, and settled formations. This one-sidedness derives from the splitting of politics into two aspects and then arranging the world into two layers with a clear order of priority. Obvious and routine understandings of politics are contrasted to a more difficult to discern but more fundamental layer—the site and source of the political as such. The resulting distinction between politics and the political serves as the basis for additional, second-order distinctions such as instituting and institutionalized power, constituent and constituting power, or constituent and destituent power.[1]

One version or another of the distinction between politics and the political,

and its interpretation in a strongly ontological register, is central to the work of a number of radical thinkers, including Claude Lefort and Cornelius Castoriadis, Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière and Pierre Rosanvallon, Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito. Whether explicitly developed as an oppositional contrast or just elaborated as an account of the difference between layers of obviousness and constitutive depths, the ontological interpretation of the political is often deployed to castigate both contemporary politics and political thought for their timidity. From this perspective, all the stuff of ordinary politics—representative democracy, parties, elections, and opinion polls—covers over or obscures something more fundamental. So, too, does much of contemporary social-movement activism and nongovernmental action. And recognizing that this is so is meant to be the first step in unleashing the disruptive force of the political and the proliferation of new forms of politics.

In parsing some of the differences between ontological interpretations of the political, I seek to redeem what is of most value in this tradition of thought from the rather mechanical way in which it is applied as a tool of knockdown analysis of real-world events. In the terms discussed in chapter 1, the ontologization of the political exemplifies one of the two post-Marxist intellectual trajectories identified by Axel Honneth—the one in which the search for the source of social transformation is displaced into general accounts of the play between order and routine, on the one hand, and uncertainty and disruption, on the other. The turn to ontology is in part related to the historical disappearance of the social facts that once anchored political hope for the European Left in particular. It is also shaped by an intellectual milieu in which ideas about agency, intentionality, and interests are thought to have been proven to be incoherent grounds upon which to understand political action.

Among other things, the ontological turn is a manifestation of the ascendency of a certain form of revivified philosophical reasoning in radical theory more generally. One dimension of the reaffirmation of philosophical authority is a calculated disdain for empirical social science. One effect of the constitutive distancing from the empirical and the everyday in ontologies of the political is that the world appears in this style of political theory only as a series of transparently iconographic events, immediately available for philosophical interpretation.[2] The spatial and temporal conventions of newsworthiness are thereby inadvertently elevated into transcendental conditions of possibility for the manifestation of the political in all its purity: it is in the drama of events performed in public space that we are meant to find "proper" politics.

The ontological interpretation of the concept of the political is associated, then, with a recurring spatialization of the emergent dynamics of democratic politics, as discussed in the previous chapter. This leads to a view of politics that contrasts settled configurations of all-encompassing, systematic power with acts of pure

creativity, ruptural events, and the dynamics of ungovernable autonomy. This particular spatialization of the political is associated with the elision of questions of motivation and rational action, and in turn with a certain degree of disdain for both social science and ordinary politics. The justificatory dilemma outlined in chapter 1 is thereby revealed to be particularly acute for this style of theory. I suggest that the turn to ontology in political thought involves an unacknowledged arrogation of interpretative authority. It is with this thought in mind that I seek to redeem something of value from discussions of the concept of the political—what I will call a heuristic interpretation of what is at stake in splitting politics into two elements. The distinction between politics and its conditions is, after all, a theme that also resonates across the second of the two trajectories of radical thought identified by Honneth that were discussed in chapter 1. It is at work, for example, in the work of Jürgen Habermas and of Roberto Unger. It also has a distinctive form in the styles of argument associated with writers such as Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, and Sheldon Wolin, and more recently William Connolly and Bonnie Honig.[3] In the next three chapters, then, I seek to rearrange the terms of evaluation through which the concept of the political appears to be important. In this chapter, I start this task by suggesting that there is a broadly phenomenological imagination at work in the interpretations provided by thinkers such as Claude Lefort, Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Pierre Rosanvallon, among others. It is this imagination that can inform a further elaboration of the intellectual trajectory of critical theories of democracy that are concerned with understanding the plural rationalities of political action.

Ontologies of Ontology

The ontological interpretation of the concept of the political raises a stark contrast between two layers of political life. Taken-for-granted forms of politics, in the form of partisan competition, policy making, and administration, are held to express a consensus that reproduces established orders. The political, on the other hand, is taken to be the realm of real antagonisms covered over by mere politics, or else is presented as the energy of constitution that always underlies apparently stable and natural forms. The turn to ontology therefore also involves a turn away from conventional forms of knowing about politics. The deployment of the distinction between politics and the political is often associated with the more or less explicit claim that having the correct ontology can itself provide us with a guide to good politics.[4]

Before going any further, and in order to specify the type of ontological account of political life with which I am primarily concerned in the following three chapters, it is helpful to distinguish three different ways that "ontology" is understood in contemporary social theory.

The first sense in which politics and ontology are connected is perhaps the most straightforward. For example, according to Philip Pettit, a political ontology is "an account of the relationships and structure in virtue of which individuals in a polity constitute a people, a nation, and a state."[5] This definition might actually be a little restrictive, so we can extend the idea to include assumptions and arguments about structure and agency, the nature of causality, relations between mind and body, the role of ideas, or the nature of power.[6] This first sense of political ontology depends on the standard definition of ontology in social theory more generally. In this definition, ontology just refers to the idea that any field of inquiry will have implicit schemas that cannot finally be justified on empirical grounds alone. Elaborating the ontology of a way of thinking in this sense involves bringing explicitly into view the set of things that a theory or system presumes in advance to exist—assumptions about human capacities, for example, or about spatial units such as locations or territories. This understanding of ontology underwrites a form of critical analysis that is often used to dismantle the underlying assumptions of different theories and find them wanting in some way or other. This form of analysis assumes that ontology is a kind of implicit commitment. It is a form of analysis associated with arguments about the need to explicitly develop alternative, preferable, ontologies—ontologies of relational spatiality, for example, or transformational ontologies of social action, or ontologies of practice.

The first sense of political ontology, in which outlining the ontology of a tradition, practice, or theory can serve as a critical exercise, is prone to the problem that Willard Quine once called ontological relativity: "Ontology is indeed doubly relative. Specifying the universe of a theory makes sense only relative to some background theory, and only relative to some choice of a manual of translation of one theory into the other."[7] To put Quine's point another way, exposing someone else's ontological assumptions is not necessarily the knockdown procedure that is often presumed. It works as a critical procedure only if one thinks that one can do without ontological commitments of any sort or that one's own are somehow beyond reproach.[8] It is no doubt always useful to be able to spot other people's ontological commitments as well as to be aware of one's own. It is another thing entirely to suppose that the answer to the questions raised by this awareness will be found by refining a more perfect ontology.

The second sense of ontology evident in social theory is associated with a range of works in the humanities and social sciences that take as their object of analysis the ontologies upon which social life itself depends, as distinct from uncovering the ontologies implicit in theories or methodologies. Much of this work is inflected by a distinctive interpretation of Heidegger's philosophy, and it includes the type of "historical ontology" alluded to by Michel Foucault and refined by Ian Hacking.[9] One might also include here the range of political theory that Stephen White labels as "weak ontology."[10] In differentiating between weak and strong ontologies, White argues that the latter make assertive foundational claims about the

nature of existence, the structure of reality, human nature, and the status of God. Weak ontologies, by contrast, merely present "figurations" of human being in light of certain universal "existential realities," such as language, birth, and death. In a sense, then, the difference is really one of tone, or perhaps ambition.

The difference between the second sense of ontology and the first is nicely captured by Noortje Marres.[11] To think of ontology as the basic assumptions about fundamental entities that underwrite a social theory is, she suggests, to retain an epistemic notion of ontology. By contrast, she recommends a more empirical sense of ontology, a sense that directs attention to the contingent composition of the practices and relations that make up social life. This is, for example, the operative sense of ontology in work inflected by actor-network theory, science and technology studies, assemblage theory, and a broad field of new materialist thought.[12] Work in these areas presumes that the world is held together through provisional but relatively settled arrangements of heterogeneous elements: people, animals, bricks and mortar, electricity, and energy. Illuminating these ontologies is meant to be one step in broadening the scope of the political beyond human agency.[13]

The strong political claim made in work concerned with elucidating the ontologies of specific fields of practice and life is that because the orderings of these fields are contingent—which means they are settled but never quite fixed—they are always potentially open to change. This is the claim that lies behind the idea of "ontological politics."[14] The idea of ontology in discussions of ontological politics is not foundational in a classical philosophical sense.[15] It refers to the idea that the constitutive material conditions of practices are never fixed or pregiven but are continually enacted. If one accepts that the task of social inquiry is to bring to light the way in which the social is assembled, then it is a short step to the proposition that the political significance of this form of social inquiry lies in reconfiguring the mundane practices through which the world hangs together. This tradition of social science therefore has a tendency to think of the political only in relation to the opening up of settled orders to contestation. Accordingly, a situation will be deemed postpolitical if the space of controversy is closed down, a judgment easily applied to a broad range of routine administrative, bureaucratic, technical, expert-led, undramatic forms of action. Democracy, from this perspective, is reserved as the name for any practice through which established orders are opened up to critical questioning.

The two versions of ontology discussed so far—political ontology in the most obvious sense and the empirical program of ontological politics—help to specify what is distinctive about a third style of ontological reasoning: assertively philosophical interpretations of the concept of the political. This style defines the meaning of the political through a conceptual two-step: first, political life is split into two; then, fundamental ontological priority is ascribed to a layer of being that in some way both forms and unsettles more routine orders of action. Ontological

interpretations of the political of this sort lay claim to some deep animating principle of human affairs, such as irreducible antagonism in Chantal Mouffe's work or the magma of imaginary significations in the work of Cornelius Castoriadis.[16] Ontological accounts in this third sense always take the form of discovering an element of dehiscence immanent in the deep structures of desire, signification, or materiality itself. These accounts are meant, in turn, to provide reasons and resources for believing in the contingency of existing arrangements.

What is most notable about ontological interpretations of the political of this sort is the claim that the structure of ontology itself accounts for the distinction between the political and ordinary politics. Thus Oliver Marchart uses the decidedly Heideggerian formula "the political difference" to characterize the division between mere politics as it is ordinarily understood and practiced and the political in its authentic or proper sense.[17] I will return to the significance of the reference to Heidegger's thought in this formula in due course, but here I want to point to the way that this sort of ontological interpretation underwrites a specific conceptual spatialization of the political. In accounts of constitutive outsides, constitutive lacks, or virtual structures waiting to be actualized, the structure of the world is defined as divided between forces of order, on the one side, and energies of creativity, disruption, or insurrection, on the other. Such accounts present order as a function of closure, settlement, and mundane routine. In turn, political change appears as the irruption of excluded or marginalized terms, as sudden events of rupture, or as the unleashing of the energy of becoming. In a characteristic conceptual move, the agency for transformative change is not located in particular social actors or organizational forms but is deduced from philosophical explications of the ontological composition of the world itself. One effect of the ontological deduction of transformational possibility is that political change is always presented as a kind of tragic drama in which radically new and unexpected events occur but are always prone to be thwarted, incorporated, or finally disappointed.

I suggest that we can read ontological interpretations of the political, characterized by the bifurcation of politics into two layers, as a response to what Theodor Adorno once diagnosed as the "ontological need" that besets modern thought. For Adorno, the recourse to an ontological register of philosophical reasoning, exemplified for him by Heidegger's work, is a flawed response to the genuine hazards that follow from modeling philosophy on a restrictive view of natural science and mathematics. Adorno suggests that the search for an order of thought set off and distinct from the everyday world and from fields of rational calculation can be seen as a desire to sustain "a remembrance of the will not to let thoughts be robbed of that for the sake of which men think them." As a response to this desire, the ontological need is most often expressed in the explicit disavowal of science, of the empirical, of the methodological, and indeed, of the everyday itself.[18]

I have distinguished three different ways of thinking about the relationship

between politics and ontology in order to help specify the types of investments required to take strongly ontological interpretations of the political as seriously as their proponents demand that we should. In the third genre of political ontology that I have identified, ontological claims are presented as a distanced, third-person perspective on underpinning conditions of possibility. But there is a more intersubjective register of ontological elaboration available to us, one in which we can think of ontological accounts as a matter of describing the structure of our own commitments.[19] In this more modest usage, ontological accounts help to disclose what we are committed to in what we do, what is obligatory for participants in a practice to believe and do—the set of "qualitative discriminations" within which agency unfolds.[20] Peter Strawson's distinction between descriptive and revisionary metaphysics helps to clarify how such a modest approach to ontology can orient our engagement with concepts of the political. Descriptive metaphysics is "content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world." Revisionary metaphysics is "concerned to produce a better structure."[21] Bearing in mind the degree to which ontology is just a smart word for metaphysics, I follow Strawson's distinction and propose that ontological arguments may be most worthy of our attention when they are presented in a descriptive register but that we should look on more revisionary versions with much more suspicion.

The idea that ontological accounts can and should transform whole ways of approaching and apprehending phenomena in a revisionary way is widespread among strands of radical thought, stretching from ontologies of the political to spatial theories of topology to cultural theories of affect. It is an idea that effectively displaces the justificatory dilemmas discussed in chapter 1 into authoritative claims concerning the capacity of master thinkers to grasp the true shape of the world. I will now trace various ways in which the ontological bifurcation of political life is undertaken in different theoretical traditions, with an eye to recovering from this ontologizing genre traces of a descriptive understanding of the rationalities of action through which political life is sustained.

Double Inscriptions of the Political

Ontological interpretations of the concept of the political play an important role in the widely shared diagnosis of the present-day conjuncture as postdemocratic or even postpolitical.[22] The proposition that we are living in a postpolitical age is just one example of a more general worry that the precious force of authentic political life is always in danger of being lost or forgotten. There are different versions of this theme. For Colin Crouch, the trend toward postdemocracy has to do with the decline of social classes and the modes of mass politics associated with them, under pressure from a general process of globalization.[23] Politics has apparently been reduced to a game played between elites. Wendy Brown makes a similar

argument, finding that a neoliberal leviathan of market rule has undermined the very conditions of democratic agency.[24] For Sheldon Wolin, the political has been erased by the rise of "totalitarian democracy," manifested by the extension of the logics of mass consumerism to all areas of life, including the management of the political process.[25]

Accounts of the postpolitical condition or postdemocracy tend to oscillate between two forms of diagnosis. On the one hand, they find evidence of the postpolitical in the observable decline of familiar patterns of political action, such as falling rates of voter participation, the decay of class-based party systems, or the decline of established modes of civic participation.[26] On the other hand, they also point to the emergence of new forms of collective life to confirm the postpolitical condition, finding evidence, for example, in the institutionalization of multiculturalism, the expansion of philanthropy, the growth of policies of sustainability, the proliferation of so-called life politics, the institutionalization of human rights policies, and the problematization of climate change. None of these areas is considered able to generate new forms of contention or mobilization worthy of the name political. The politics associated with these types of fields does not quite conform to a rather constricting imagination of properly political action. It does not quite look right. As already suggested, evidence of the insurgent return of the properly political always alights on a single form of action, namely dramatic protest action in archetypal public spaces. It is therefore worthwhile reflecting on the understanding of the political at work in the background of these diagnoses of the postpolitical condition.

Perhaps the purest form of the genre of ontological argument in contemporary political thought is Alain Badiou's account of the political as an event, derived from an ontology rooted in the mathematics of set theory. For Badiou, politics is a kind of truth procedure, a matter of personal fidelity to an interruption of the stable orders of what he calls the "errancy of the state," by which he means the essentially repressive nature of modern state forms.[27] Badiou draws a stark contrast between overweening state power and agentless events that nonetheless represent the truth of collective life. He opposes "convocations by the state," that is, the agendas and sequences of ordinary politics, to "events" that interrupt but also expose and provoke this ordering. Badiou's model of politics seeks to supplant a dialectical theory of negation with a notion of politics as "subtraction," which involves identifying and somehow inhabiting an autonomous position that exceeds settled orderings. Badiou's is, in the final analysis, a vision of politics shaped by an attitude of horror toward all forms of pluralistic heteronomy.

While Badiou provides the most assertively foundational account of the ontological bifurcation of political life, the clearest diagnosis of the postpolitical condition is provided by Slavoj Žižek.[28] Žižek identifies four ways in which proper politics is stifled. Three of these he derives from Jacques Rancière's discussion of the ways in which philosophers have tended to reduce what he calls "politics,"

which is meant to be a rare and ruptural phenomenon, to the routines of management and administration, or what Rancière calls "police." Rancière identifies three such maneuvers: archipolitics, which refers to the communitarian containment of the polemical aspects of politics, especially democracy (here the master figure is Plato); parapolitics, which accepts the specificity and irreducibility of politics but removes the antagonistic element through rules (typified as ever by Habermas and Rawls, but referring all the way back to Aristotle); and metapolitics, typified by Marxism and by socialist thought more broadly, in which politics is reduced to an expression of a more fundamental economic or social logic, so that the social is made to appear as the source of injustice and in turn as "the truth of politics."[29] To these three postpolitical moves Žižek adds a fourth form of his own, which he calls "ultra-politics." This involves taking conflicts to the extremes of stark us-versus-them categorical oppositions.

For Žižek, our age is postpolitical because of the general tendency to seek to reduce the antagonistic element of politics and to replace it with technocratic forms of management, justified in the name of economic growth or security. For Rancière, we live in an age of "consensual postdemocracy," marked by the disappearance of any space for the emergence of disputes about the existing order. He suggests that we are witnessing nothing less than "the disappearance of democracy" and the ascendancy of an order marked by the dominance of "the spread of law, the practice of generalized expertise, and practice of the eternal opinion poll."[30]

Both Žižek and Rancière illustrate a style of theorizing shaped by what Žižek himself once called "the double inscription of the political."[31] Like the idea of the political difference, this formula refers to the distinction between politics understood as acts of disruption, foundation, or institution, on the one hand, and politics as routines of instituted policy making, elections, lobbying, and campaigning, on the other. The properly political is always reserved for activities that fall under the former description.

The double inscription of the political, and in particular its strong ontological inflection, has various sources and follows various trajectories, some of which I will trace over the next three chapters. One common refrain across different variants of this theme is the assertion of the excess of the political over instituted forms of politics. Activities on the instituted politics side of the equation tend to be treated as banal, inauthentic, restrictive, and improper in one way or another. Voting, elections, lobbying, policy making—the stuff of ordinary politics, one might think—are presented as part of a fixed, instituted order, a status quo, all merely aspects of a world of consensus. In this style of theorizing, properly political action is rare, or on the retreat, or can be found only in unexpected places. Ontological interpretations of the political therefore share in a broader understanding of modern liberal democracy in which politics has closed down the possibility of properly heroic action.

The concept of the political certainly has different resonances in different traditions of thought. It sometimes refers to a dimension of constant agonistic energy, sometimes to a constitutive process of ordering, and sometimes to the dimension of life that is shared in common. Each version more or less explicitly disparages ordinary politics, which is interpreted as the scene of the shrinking away or diminution of genuine democratic or revolutionary energy. Across the diverse uses of the distinction between politics and the political, the prevalent emphasis is on the idea that social order is reproduced through structures of obviousness to which the subjective dispositions of whole populations are in thrall. In turn, it is assumed that genuine political action involves breaking with these structures of obviousness. Proper politics is consequently restricted to those fugitive practices that call into question habitual understandings of politics, unleash the energy of the political, or seek to reorder the political, all of which are seen as fundamentally disrupting settled patterns of subject formation.

Inflections of Political Difference

The difference made visible by the double inscription of the political is often explicated with reference to the distinction in French between *le politique* and *la politique*, the political and politics (although the usage of this gendered distinction is hardly consistent across different thinkers). The distinction is sometimes used in a register that is strongly ontological and sometimes in a more existentialist spirit. What such treatments share is the proposition that the political is constitutive of politics. Politics in turn often turns out to threaten to efface the political upon which it depends, so that the political appears as vulnerable, fragile, or difficult to discern. Perhaps the most influential version of the distinction is found in the political philosophy of Claude Lefort. Lefort transposes a distinction in the work of his mentor Maurice Merleau-Ponty between the invisible and the visible into an account in which politics is the manifestation of a constitutive symbolization that lies outside of and yet structures visible forms of politics.[32] Lefort's use of the distinction between *le politique* and *la politique* involves the claim that empirical fields of political inquiry cannot properly grasp the constitutive ordering of the political, because they themselves belong to the constituted order of politics, the very formation of which is in need of a deeper form of philosophical analysis.

Badiou, Žižek, Rancière, Lefort, and others are all associated with the ascendancy of the concept of the political in strands of so-called continental philosophy, in which refinements of the concept are indelibly associated with debates about the legacies of Marxism in political thought. The centrality of the distinction between *le politique* and *la politique* in postwar French thought has given an important impetus to the habit of using the word "political" as a substantive noun, with a strong emphasis on the definite article in references to "the political." The nom-

inalization of the adjective expresses what Hannah Pitkin once suggested was the "systematic ambiguity in our ideas about the political."[33] For Pitkin, the ambiguity arises from the tension between idealist and realist dimensions of political life:

> On the one side, there begins to emerge a picture of politics that is participatory and democratic, equalitarian rather than hierarchical; a politics that is public-spirited and treats others as persons, in terms of their concerns and commitments; a politics that centers on action, and does not hesitate to call traditional institutions into question. On the other side, there emerges a different picture: a stress on the role of hierarchy, organization, and elites in politics; a linkage between political rationality and the support of traditional institutions; a stress on power and the conflict of interests rather than on public-spiritedness; a politics in which men relate by bargaining, propaganda, and manipulation.[34]

The contrast Pitkin makes here is not quite the same as the one drawn in continental philosophers' characteristic differentiation of politics and the political. But she points out an important feature of concept formation that does straddle different versions of theorizing the political. Pitkin argues that the rival definitions she identifies "are both very much bound to the grammar of the word, and both illuminate it." She adds that "the noun 'politics' and particularly the adjective 'politic' lend themselves best to a social-scientific interpretation of the political in terms of interests and strategy."[35] Politics in this sense is all about who gets what and how. Pitkin proposes that both Hannah Arendt and Sheldon Wolin preferred the adjective "political" and in turn often moved to make it into a substantive—"the political"—because they are concerned with the public and collective aspects of political life that the ordinary sense of politics, according to them, covers over.

Pitkin's distinction between idealist and realist dimensions of politics does not necessarily only divide political theorists from social scientists. It might also be at work within the field concerned with conceptualizing the political as a distinct realm from politics. Both Arendt and Wolin might well operate with more "idealist" notions of the political in the sense used by Pitkin, compared to the darker images presented by thinkers as different as Carl Schmitt and Jacques Rancière. It is a difference of interpretation to which we will return in due course.

Pitkin's suggestion is that thinkers such as Arendt and Wolin make recourse to etymology and ancient Greek authorities in order "to recall us from the habitual forms to the substance of the political, of our own concept of the political."[36] The force of invoking the concept of the political certainly lies in challenging the obviousness of our usual ideas about politics. The motivation behind the conceptual splitting that Pitkin identifies echoes Adorno's comments about the enticements of "the ontological need." It is, in short, a response to an imperative that is not to be easily scorned. Nevertheless, we should also be alert to the ways in which invocations of the political difference invite us to think of the obviousness of existing understandings of politics in very particular ways, in ways that invite us to invest

in particular models of what politics can and should properly seek to do. After all, the idea that there is more to politics than the business of state and occasional popular involvement in elections is actually fairly widely held. It hardly begins to justify the habits of a tradition of thought that is shaped by a commitment to theorizing politics by developing strong oppositions between pairs of concepts. We might also notice that calling into question the obvious is a defining feature of the much broader field of theory in the social sciences and humanities.[37] When translated to the analysis of political practices, the gesture of questioning the taken for granted leads to the supposition that suspending the obviousness of what is ordinarily thought of as politics reveals the political in all its authenticity.

Pitkin's observations about the motivations behind the conceptual bifurcation of political life and the associated nominalization of the political remind us that although it is often associated with continental philosophy, the double inscription of the political is also a defining feature of a distinctive strand of post–World War II American political thought. Here, too, one finds a conceptual distinction between a more or less ordinary sense of politics and a more constitutive sense of politics, as well as the assertion of the authority of a certain sort of philosophical reasoning over the claims of social science. It is a strand of thought that shares features of the genre as a whole, but it also has certain distinctive inflections that are worthy of attention as an alternative to the strongly antagonistic investments that define post-Marxist ontologies of the political. By elaborating on these inflections, we may open up a different, less ontologically assertive line of interpretation of the concept of the political and its potential in helping us understand the dynamics of political action.

The key figure in the consolidation of a tradition of American political theory concerned with asserting the difference between routines of politics and the discernment of the core meaning of political life is Sheldon Wolin. In the 1960s Wolin framed his account of the vocation of political theory against an intradisciplinary opponent. For Wolin, theorizing is a creative act, an act of vision and envisioning, in contrast to a mere methodological concern.[38] The development of political theory as a distinct field of discourse therefore arose in professional opposition to the positivist ambitions of post–World War II political science.[39]

Wolin's particular intellectual vision rests on the strong claim, found also in Arendt's work, that political theory has an intimate relationship with philosophy without being identical with it.[40] As already noted, for Wolin, asserting the importance of the political is in no small part a matter of carving out a space in an academic division of labor. It is an assertion that recenters thought about political life around the study of the canon of Western thought. The vocation of theory is expressed in a conviction that the autonomy of political life should not be reduced to sociological, psychological, or economic determinants. Identifying and safeguarding the autonomy of political life is a central concern for theories of the political, from Marxist and post-Marxist theorists to thinkers such

as Arendt, Pitkin, and Wolin. It is a shared concern that rests on the disavowal of any sustained consideration of the relations between political action and other dimensions of life, a consideration sullied by the contortions of concepts such as "relative autonomy" or the reductions of quantitative social science. The problematic of autonomy that underlies the elaboration of concepts of the political means that these relations can appear only as ones of mutual but asymmetrical dependence and vulnerability: being able to discern the significance of the political can throw light on more ordinary experiences, but these latter always threaten or cover over that true significance.

Definitions of the political as the name for a discrete realm of human life are anchored in efforts to delineate a field of scholarly endeavor. Such efforts connect the projects of Wolin or Pitkin, for example, to those of Lefort or Rancière. One reason to remember this shared effort is because, as Emily Hauptmann observes, "much of the relevant 'outside' for contemporary political theorists now lies outside the discipline of political science itself."[41] As a result, a particular model of the vocation of theory is made more widely available as this tradition of thought travels in new directions. In this model, ideas of authentic political action derived from a written canon of Western political thought come to serve as the interpretative-normative grid in which to place often rather stylized empirical observations. In short, a constitutive disavowal of social science continues to shape the forms of political theory that now increasingly find themselves newly embraced by decidedly empirical fields such as human geography and anthropology, sociology, and urban studies.

What defines the political, for Wolin, is not relations of rivalry or struggle, which are given so much importance by other theorists of radical democracy. In contrast to the view that the political is all about antagonism, conflict, or hostility, Wolin presents the imaginative element of political theory as part of ongoing reflection on the conditions of shared public life. *This* is what the political means in his thought. He argues that examination of the Western political tradition indicates that there is "a recurrent tendency to identify what is political with what is general to a society."[42] This "general quality of the political" leads Wolin to claim that political theory is concerned with what is "common" to the whole of a society. In this understanding, both modern politics and mainstream political science are complicit in the diminution of the relationship between the idea of what is political and the question of what is general, common, or public. So it is that Wolin argues, "The sense of the political has been lost."[43]

For Wolin, the political refers to the "valued commonalties (peace, justice, security, culture, education)—the stuff of vision—to be shared, promoted, tended, and defended by those who are members."[44] Wolin certainly holds to the view that the political resists institutionalization. But his rendition of this theme is distinct from other variants of a similar-looking argument: "I shall take the *political* to be an expression of the idea that a free society composed of diversities can

nonetheless enjoy moments of commonality when, through public deliberations, collective power is used to promote or protect the well-being of the collectivity. *Politics* refers to the legitimized and public contestation, primarily by organized and unequal social powers, over access to the resources available to the public authorities of the collectivity. Politics is continuous, ceaseless, and endless. In contrast, the political is episodic, rare."[45] We can see here how Wolin associates the political with shared and common experiences of collective power. He presents ordinary politics not as a world of routine management and administration but as a world of ongoing partisan contestation. The content Wolin gives to the difference between politics and the political is therefore quite distinctive. At the core of Wolin's vision is the contrast he makes between moments of collective experience and the routines of partisan politics.

The distinctive sense of the political as a realm of collective life informs Wolin's elaboration of the meaning of democracy. He defines democracy as "one among many versions of the political," but above all it is for him a rare and fragile phenomenon. Wolin has recourse to the same temporal image that recurs across ontological interpretations of the political. Institutionalization of democratic politics, he claims, actually "marks the attenuation of democracy," which leads him to assert that democracy is best thought of as "a moment rather than a form."[46] For him "democracy is a project concerned with the political potentialities of ordinary citizens, that is with their possibilities of becoming political beings through the self-discovery of common concerns and of modes of action for realizing them."[47] According to Wolin, this project is increasingly at risk of being incorporated into managed, commodified systems of administration and bureaucracy. Wolin holds that democracy is necessarily a delicate, vulnerable aspect of human relations properly thought of as a fugitive energy. But he also asserts that the contemporary moment is one in which this energy is somehow particularly vulnerable. Viewing contemporary capitalism and state power as inherently antidemocratic, Wolin affirms "the status of democracy as standing opposition."[48] Democracy for him is an occasional event whose agents are the relatively powerless: "those who have no means of redress other than to risk collectivizing their small bits of power." As such, democracy is necessarily "an ephemeral phenomenon rather than a settled system."[49] In its dependence on a contrast between established order and rare events of oppositional dissent, Wolin's image of democracy resonates with other strands of radical democratic theory.

Wolin provides only one version of how the double inscription of the political can be used to frame an evaluation of the health of democracy. That version is notable because it approaches the political primarily by reference to figures of commonality and collectivity, rather than antagonism and enmity. But it is also exemplary in positing a contrast between two types of time: the time of institutionalized routines and the disruptive time of the event. Wolin presents democracy as a disruptive process and as an interruption of "the ordinary tempos of

the political process." He therefore contrasts two ideal types of politics and their associated rhythms: "One conception represents agitation as disruptive, energetic intervention whose results include a large element of the unpredictable and perhaps some element of the anarchic; the other is represented by an ideal of action as orderly, stylized, shaped and limited by prescribed processes, procedures, even time-tables, that are designed to produce predictable (i.e. consistent) decisions or results."[50] This motif of two temporal orders—one settled and routine, the other disruptive but fleeting—is shared across the genre of ontological interpretations of the political as a whole.

The Difference That Ontology Makes

We have seen that the theme of the political is the product of a widely shared theoretical habit of presuming that concepts are formed in opposing pairs. These pairs offer themselves up for deconstructive reconfiguration, or they open a space between them for the tragic affirmation of constitutive paradox, or they provide the key to critical evaluation of the merely ontic manifestations of politics by reference to the more fundamental energies of the political.

The form of categorical division that defines this genre of theory has different sources, sometimes traced back to Spinoza, sometimes to Carl Schmitt's deeply illiberal critique of liberal democracy. But as we have already seen, a key reference point for the double inscription of the political is Heidegger's analysis of ontological difference—the distinction between what there is and the fundamental being of what there is, between beings and Being, or between the "ontic" and the "ontological."[51] The distinction has become the source for the idea that the ontological is a kind of layer that in some sense has priority over the merely ontic. It is this idea that underwrites the strongly ontological interpretation of the theme of the political difference. The distinction between the ontological and the ontic is often interpreted in terms of a contrast between an aspect of practice in which the conditions of focused activities fade into the background and an aspect in which these conditions become an object of reflection itself. My own concern here is not with establishing the correct interpretation of Heidegger's philosophy, much less with the vexed question of the relationships between Heidegger's own personal and political opinions and his philosophy. I am interested in the ways in which the account of the difference between the ontic and the ontological has been given a political inflection.

The idea that democracy is best apprehended through an appreciation of the double inscription of the political depends in no small part on a politicized interpretation of the Heideggerian theme of ontological difference, according to which there is a sharp distinction between things as they are given to experience and a more fundamental dimension that constitutes the given as such. Fred Dallmayr

warns against the temptation to transform the distinction into "a rigid bifurcation between structure and infrastructure, between foundation and derivations, or between noumenal and phenomenal spheres of analysis."[52] Dallmayr's warning anticipates exactly how the distinction has in fact been interpreted in a burgeoning field of Left ontologies. He argues that the appropriate construal of the distinction is not just a matter of how the difference between politics and the political is interpreted. It is a matter of whether the difference between the ontic and the ontological should be interpreted as a derivative one at all.

The derivative interpretation of ontological difference is in fact a crucial feature of the double inscription of the political in theories of radical democracy. For example, Chantal Mouffe affirms, "One could say that 'the political' is situated at the level of the ontological, while politics belongs to the ontic."[53] This type of claim makes the ontic level of politics an expression of a more fundamental level, the political. Theorists who follow this line of thought argue that the distinction is necessary because it allows us to draw into view the ontological dimension at which society is itself instituted and upon which the very possibility of a renewal of radical politics is premised.[54] This sort of argument has two implications for how the political emerges as a theme in democratic theory. First, it requires a reading the ontic/ontological distinction in terms of a layer-cake model of levels and priorities. Second, the politicization of the distinction reinforces a representation of political life that juxtaposes appearances, settlements, and naturalizations against disruptions, exposures, and invention. As a genre, ontological interpretations of the political therefore reiterate a classically Heideggerian motif of searching after the fundamental significance of things through a form of experience that exceeds immediate impressions.[55] This genre presents familiar political phenomena as dependent on something other than themselves, but not in terms of social or economic variables. Rather, mundane politics is related to an inaugural movement that is somehow constitutive of the autonomy of political life itself. In turn, proper politics involves the disclosure of this very structure in thought and action.

The strong ontological interpretation of the political has become central to a theoretical narrative in which political life is constituted by "the ceaseless play" of having to posit a foundation as a condition of action and the inevitably imperfect and incomplete nature of any such foundation.[56] This narrative informs the view that established patterns and routines necessarily depend on a set of constitutive conditions in order to proceed, but that those conditions cannot normally be acknowledged or made present from within those patterns and routines without fundamentally disrupting their smooth operation. In important respects, this view of action transposes a generic poststructuralist critique of epistemological foundationalism into the vocabulary of political analysis, and it remains trapped within the terms of certainty and doubt inherited from that same critique. The discovery that foundations cannot be grounded in a source of certainty beyond question often leads to the embrace of paradoxical formulas such as "contingent

foundations," "strategic essentialism," or "contingent universalism," all of which still assume that action must always require some form of firm grounding, however temporarily fixed it might actually be.[57] Postfoundational theories of the political simply shift this form of skeptical reasoning away from questions of the justifiability of knowledge claims or the dynamics of identity formation and inscribe it into the ontological structure of the world itself. The postfoundational construal of ontological difference therefore opens up a sense of the world as always open to radical transformation by rendering the world into a kind of tragic philosophical trial. Politics is the dull and routine administration of tightly choreographed competition, but this realm is susceptible to dramatic events of rupture in which the conditions of those dull routines are temporarily made present, disrupting and reconstituting politics anew before retreating from view once again.

But what if the discovery of the absence of secure foundations for action as well as belief is not interpreted in quite so melodramatic terms? What if the consequence of the lack of certainty is not necessarily the dizzying experience of pure contingency that must also require some temporary remedy? What if we just stop thinking of ordinary politics as a settled order derivative of a more fundamental layer of constitution or institution? Perhaps a first step toward suspending our credulity before the genre conventions associated with ontological interpretations of the political is to reconsider the force of the most explicitly Heideggerian account of the double inscription of the political. This will lead us to reconsider the theoretical significance of a tradition of democratic thought developed in the shadow of questions about the meaning of twentieth-century totalitarianism.

Partaking of the Political

So far in this chapter I have traced some of the features of a genre of argument that claims that the meaning of democracy is best disclosed by grasping in theory and unleashing in practice "the specificity of the political." This genre has different inflections, to be sure, and I want to avoid the temptation to either embrace or dismiss all of its elements. As already noted, among the most significant sources of the ontological interpretation of the political is the work of Claude Lefort, not least as the authority for the translation of the difference and ambiguity between the political (*le politique*) and politics (*la politique*) into English-speaking social thought. Lefort uses the distinction to contrast two styles of analysis, suggesting that *le politique* resists empirical analysis and is open only to philosophical inquiry.[58] He argues that the conceptual delimitation of the political in the first sense escapes the procedures of political science or sociology. The purpose of political philosophy, Lefort contends, is to identify the principles behind different "forms of society," which refers to "the ideas that are generative of the constitution of the social."[59] These ideas inevitably include religious principles, since for Lefort

the elaboration of a political form cannot be separated from the elaboration of a religious form. Any experience of politics must include a reference to a source of authority that is beyond question in some sense. Lefort's elaboration of the political around the theme of the permanence of the theologico-political is part of a wider argument that seeks to clearly differentiate political philosophy from social science analysis of politics. Whereas political science "attempts to circumscribe an order of particular facts within the social," the task of political philosophy is "to conceptualize the principle of the institution of the social."[60]

Lefort's account of the concept of the political is more existential in its emphasis than it is strongly ontological. It rests on the idea of "forms of society," which refers to different modes of instituting the social—to different ways of generating the "principles or to an overall schema governing both the temporal and the spatial configuration of society." According to Lefort, these principles "order the experience of coexistence." Showing his phenomenological credentials, in a formulation that owes something to the thought of Merleau-Ponty Lefort holds that the formation and enactment of these principles is "inseparable from the experience of the world, from the experience of the visible and the invisible in every register."[61] Lefort's political philosophy is part of a broader tradition of French political thought that seeks to distance itself from Marxism by elaborating on the constitutive relationship between twentieth-century totalitarianism and modern democracy.[62]

The task of analyzing different forms of political society is informed by Lefort's influential understanding of the significance of democracy as a historical form. For Lefort, the formation of both democracy and totalitarianism is a process that occurs at the level of collective representations of power. In Lefort's understanding, democracy is a distinctively modern mutation in the way social life is organized, that is, in how it is both staged and given meaning.[63] Lefort's crucial claim is that "democracy requires that the site of power remain empty."[64] Democracy is a form of society characterized by the disincorporation of power. For democracy to exist, a figure of "the sovereign" cannot appear to incarnate the whole community, to embody "the people," and cannot stand above the law.[65] What is distinctive about democracy here is that politics is disassociated from the nonpolitical, so that a certain form of separation is instituted between politics and other activities.[66] In turn, totalitarianism stands as both the external reference point and the ever-present possibility inaugurated by democracy.[67] For Lefort, democracy opens the historical conditions for the possibility of totalitarianism, which he understands as the reassertion of a society without division, unified and embodied in the figure of an all-powerful sovereign.

Lefort himself tends to disavow the idea that the political is "noble" but politics is only "trivial," insisting that the analysis of forms of political society is intimately tied to reflection on the actualities of political action.[68] His political philosophy is a central reference point for the emergence of democracy as an organizing theme

in post-Marxist thought, not least for establishing the distinction between politics and the political as quite central to theories of radical democracy. I will return to its use in chapter 5, when I discuss the poststructuralist account of democracy developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. At this stage it is important to underscore how Lefort's thought places questions of contestation and disagreement at the heart of democratic practice, without identifying one single source from which these questions are derived.

In important respects, Lefort's view of the dynamics of political life is a development of Merleau-Ponty's own appreciation of Machiavelli for placing conflict and struggle at the center of an account of "the milieu proper to politics."[69] Machiavelli affirms discord and dispute as the source of vitality in a polity, as the source of agonistic energy that sustains freedom and ensured accountability.[70] In so doing, Merleau-Ponty suggests, Machiavelli "finds something other than antagonism in struggle itself." What Machiavelli finds in struggle, Merleau-Ponty proposes, is "a principle of communion": "By putting conflict and struggle at the origins of social power, he did not mean to say that agreement was impossible; he meant to underline the condition for a power which does not mystify, that is, participation in a common situation."[71] In Lefort's elaboration of the same themes in Machiavelli's work, he argues that the lesson to be drawn from the realistic view that political life is shaped by conflict is not that "discord is good in itself." It is, rather, that political life requires an ongoing juggling of the imperative of achieving "concord" without institutionalizing this imperative in a way that would mask or forbid the expression of more disharmonious passions. In this understanding, the formal equality of citizens before the law, while certainly not the same as "real" equality, is not a mere sham either. It is the basis on which systems of rule are "exposed to the effects of social division, that is to say, conflicts."[72]

Drawing into view the phenomenological inheritance behind Lefort's account of the agonism of political life allows us to differentiate two quite distinct views of the relations between conflict and agreement. Such a distinction can be easily missed in loud assertions about the inherently contestatory qualities of the political. On one side, there is a view in which antagonism and agreement are diametrically opposed, often rendered in spatialized terms of exclusion and closure, disruption and rupture. On the other side is the more Machiavellian view, in which discord and disharmony are understood as the very medium of being together with others and where the political is understood to be the dimension in which the possibility of shared life is disclosed. In this view, rules, laws, and institutions are not thought of as imposing order in a negation of the properly unconstrained energies of the political. These are seen, rather, as the medium in which discord and dissension are shaped more or less effectively into means for holding rulers to account and thwarting the abuse of power by cultivating the conditions of freedom.

These two divergent views of the relations between communion and con-

flict, agreement and antagonism allow us to appreciate the significance ascribed to Lefort's account of democracy as a constitutively indeterminate formation, founded on the absence of foundation, in assertive accounts of "the politics of deconstruction."[73] In particular, Lefort serves as a key reference point in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy's formulation of "the retreat of the political." Their elaboration of this theme is an influential inflection of the strongly ontological interpretation of the double inscription of the political. At the same time, and like Wolin, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy give primacy to the dimension of being together with others in their account of the political. They therefore help us clarify different substantive emphases at work in accounts of the double inscription of the political.

The motif of the retreat of the political presented by Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy has a double reference, both of which depend on a version of the distinction between *le politique* (the political) and *la politique* (politics). First, it refers to the claim that the question of the meaning of the political withdraws when we just accept obvious understandings of politics. Second, it refers to the claim that only by refusing this obviousness is the way opened up to treating the political in new ways, or re-treating it. The retreat of the political in the first sense is, according to Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, a function of the claim that everything is political. They argue that this radical cliché both depends on and reproduces received understanding of politics. It therefore leads to "the closure of the political," that is, the elision of the question of what is political under the sway of obvious meanings of politics. In this account, the retreat of the political "means that the very *question* of the political retires and gives way to a kind of obviousness of politics or the political."[74] For Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, accepted ideologies that are complicit with the closure of the political include nationalism, class politics, and rights-based discourses.

In a variation of an argument we have already become familiar with, the closure of the political is an effect of the disappearance of "political specificity," evident in the subsumption of the political into social, economic, and psychological discourse. In the process, politics is converted "into a form of banal management and organisation."[75] Alluding to Lefort's account of forms of society, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy suggest that this amounts to nothing less than a totalitarian phenomenon. It marks the saturation of the whole field of human affairs by an instrumental, calculative sense of politics.

According to Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, the most pressing task before us is to analyze and challenge the obviousness of current understandings of politics. Re-treating the political is a task that falls primarily to philosophy, of course. For them, the task of "questioning of the *essence of the political*" is an inherently philosophical one. The political is an object of a privileged sort of philosophical questioning because, so the argument goes, the political has an internal relationship to philosophy.[76] We saw in chapter 1 how Heidegger's interpretation of the

betrayal of Greek thought in Roman translation is exemplified by an account of the transformation of an originary meaning of the political. It is this account that underlies the special claims Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy make for the privileged relationship between philosophical reflection and the questioning of the political. Re-treating the political is not just a matter of opening established meanings up to question. It is about restoring the honor and privileges of philosophical reason.

Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy use the distinction between politics and the political not only to refer to two ontologically distinct levels but also to specify a kind of philosophical activity in which what it means to be in common is open to question. In their emphasis on the issue of commonality and community, they are closer to the associative framing of the question of the political also found in Wolin and Lefort than to variants of radical democracy that emphasize antagonism. This associative emphasis is further developed in Nancy's own work. For him, "the political is the place where community as such is brought into play."[77] The question of the "in-common" is central to Nancy's own elaboration of the political and of its allusive relation to an idea of "communism." In his work, "being-in-common" is not a matter of unity but about sharing the absence of substantial identity, a sharing that is also a division. For Nancy, the political refers to "a community consciously undergoing the experience of its sharing."[78] This formula plays on the polysemy associated with the French verb *partager*, which suggests sharing but also separating, participating, dividing, partitioning. What this line of thought therefore draws attention to is the double sense of political life as a form of sharing in collective action as well as an experience of sharing out in the form of allocating, distributing, or dividing.[79]

Developed in the 1980s in the specific context of debates about the future of the French Left, the invocation of the political as the experience of the question of being-in-common was also a way of signaling the Left commitments of the philosophical tradition associated with Derrida's practice of deconstruction. In this latter role in particular, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's account of the retreat of the political was accused of amounting to little more than a justification for the withdrawal from real political action.[80] In certain respects, of course, the accusation might well confirm the terms of their own analysis, insofar as it tends to rely on an established understanding of what proper political commitment should be concerned with and how it should be undertaken. In their understanding of the retreat of the political, the disavowal of the analysis of politics in terms of interests and struggle is no retreat at all. It is rather a necessary part of "a retracing of all that being-in-common involves (being-together or being-with)."[81]

In one sense, the narrative of the retreat of the political can be interpreted as an important reminder to be sensitive to the contingent framing of any particular instance of political debate or contestation. But this is a much weaker interpretation than the authors of this account actually intend. Nancy, for example, has explicitly made the ontological inflection of political difference central to the very definition

of the Left and the Right. These two poles can be differentiated according to their relative openness to the question of the political per se. The Right, for Nancy, defines the political as being "in charge of order and administration." By contrast, "'left' means, *at the very least*, that the political, as such, is receptive to what is at stake in community."[82] Nancy here defines Left politics as an agent and medium of a special kind of philosophical experience that can resist the temptations of totalitarian incorporation. In this account, Left politics is a kind of satiation of the ontological need for forms of noninstrumental thought.

Rather than worrying about whether a theoretical argument is political enough, the most pertinent criticism of Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's avowedly deconstructive approach to the question of the political is that it reserves for philosophy alone the task of questioning existing understandings of what counts as political. Access to the required experience of questioning is not extended to other forms of action or other modes of knowing, which are presumed to be too closely entangled in received models of politics.

Aspects of the Political

Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's version of the double inscription of politics is significant because it exemplifies the way Heidegger's thought is often used in post-foundational ontologies of the political. In particular, the distinction between the ontic and the ontological, derived from Heidegger's *Being and Time* and interpreted through the lens provided by Heidegger's own later elaboration of the essence of technology, casts a long shadow over ontological interpretations of the concept of the political.[83] In the relation between these two philosophical reference points lies the space for very different interpretations of the significance of the distinction between politics and the political.

Being and Time belongs to a broader modernist tradition that is suspicious of mechanistic, utilitarian styles of reasoning. Heidegger divines that the metaphysical closure that condemns Western thought to forget the question of "Being" is expressed in the consistent determination of being as presence. It is a closure exemplified in the Cartesian image of a world of objects standing separate from and being represented to a self-present subject, a subject capable of apprehending its own presence by deducing that its own "I think" confirms its status as "I am." The closure of the question of Being is constitutive of Western thought, according to Heidegger, by which he means a philosophical tradition going back to the Roman appropriation of Greek thought. Western thought, Heidegger asserts, takes the "present-at-hand" as its primary concern and is therefore dominated by contemplative modes of apprehending the world. Objects that are "present-at-hand" are the focus of explicit attention, but we do not notice how they have come to be available in the first place, or "ready-at-hand." So it is that what is ontically familiar is ontologically strange. The distinction between present-at-hand and

ready-at-hand is related to a series of related distinctions, including those between being and Being and the ontic and the ontological. Between these pairs Heidegger posits a relation of "forgetting." The task of philosophical discourse is to attend to the forgotten background against which the modern epistemological model of detached knowing becomes intelligible. The strong implication is that this epistemological model involves a form of engagement with the world that is fallen, bereft of all that is truly authentic.

In contrast to the view provided in discussions of "the political difference," ontological interpretation and ontic interpretation are not presented as two distinct levels in *Being and Time*. They are more like different aspects of existence. Everyday phenomena are not presented as separate from or distinct from another realm, that of Being. Rather, they are shown to both express and conceal authentic Being. According to Heidegger, a specific relation of the ontic and the ontological characterizes Dasein, that is, the being-in-the-world of human life that distinguishes it from that of other entities. Dasein, for Heidegger, is "ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it," and therefore in turn "Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it *is* ontological."[84] This intimate relationship defines entities with an ontological attitude, those with an orientation toward the interpretation of Being. What is forgotten, according to Heidegger, is the intimate relationship of the "ontico-ontological" that defines Dasein. The project of fundamental ontology therefore has the task of clarifying the preontological understanding of Being that is already an aspect of the ontic. This task involves keeping a scholastic distance from ordinary modes of idle talk and chatter.

Heidegger's original account of ontological difference has been subject to various interpretations, and no little controversy. Across a range of traditions of social thought, it stands as a source for thinking about how to elaborate on the conditions through which things in the world—objects, issues, or dilemmas—show up as intelligible or actionable. Strands of hermeneutic and phenomenological social theory use it to critique propositional forms of knowledge, purely contemplative apprehensions of the world, and calculative styles of scientific reasoning. It is also often invoked to bolster accounts of the embodied, meaningful qualities of social life that are rolled into practices (accounts which easily overlook the fact that forms of cognitive and calculative knowing are themselves practices). And in political interpretations of the ontic/ontological distinction, as we have seen, the ontological is often presented as a layer equivalent to the political, so that the political is presented as fundamental and constitutive, as more authentically expressive of the essence of political life. In rendering the distinction as a contrast between routines on the one hand and disruptive and foundational events on the other, political interpretations of ontological difference tend to repeatedly elide the sense found in Heidegger's original formulation of two aspects being folded together in practices.

I want now to return to Dallmayr's warning about mapping the ontic/ontological distinction straight onto a distinction between the obvious manifes-

tations of politics and a more fundamental dimension of the political. His point is not just that we should be wary of too quickly making this move. Recall that Dallmayr invites us to question the derivative and hierarchical interpretation of the relationship between the ontic and the ontological on which strong ontological interpretations of the political depend. The layered interpretation of ontological difference in accounts of the double inscription of the political relies heavily on Heidegger's writings subsequent to *Being and Time*. In particular, Heidegger's analysis of the essence of technology underwrites the translation of the notion of ontological difference into political theory.[85] The question of technology is central to Heidegger's displaced nonengagement with his own political commitments to the Nazi Party in the 1930s.[86] And it is the source of a much starker and explicitly normative contrast between rationality and thinking, where the latter refers narrowly to certain select forms of poetic and meditative reflection. By juxtaposing technologized reason and meditative thinking, Heidegger is able to suggest that in the modern world everything is rendered "immediately at hand" and thereby turned into a "standing reserve," as objects waiting to be instrumentally used in some way. This is the process he calls "enframing," that is, the ordering of things to be calculated and put to use. Enframing encourages a will to mastery and conceals other ways of relating by turning people and life into things to be ordered. The realm of proper and authentic questioning is reserved for art. In Heidegger's account of enframing, objects are made available for use, including as objects of knowledge, by being offered up to be represented. This is nothing short of a historical event, one through which the world is itself "conceived and grasped as a picture."[87] The idea of enframing has subsequently informed various forms of radical social theory, including critical accounts of colonial power and of the calculative rationalities of the modern state.[88]

Heidegger's later analysis of technology is a significant influence on the interpretation of the ontic/ontological distinction in political theory. Reading ontological difference under the sway of his account of enframing, one easily arrives at the idea that what appears obvious as politics is in fact a fixing in place of the world as an accessible, measurable, calculable field to be managed and manipulated. Politics in this immediately accessible sense is understood to depend on but also to cover over a more fundamental source of constitutive energy. And this more fundamental realm is best revealed not by empirical analysis or anything so crude as methodology but only through a special kind of esoteric philosophical reflection.

By recognizing the different elements of Heidegger's thought that have informed ontological interpretations of the political, we can better see how these interpretations perform a conceptual two-step in asserting their authority. In a first move, they construe ontological difference as a difference between different layers of existence in which the ontological layer is given an ill-defined priority. This construal is in turn quite crucial to the subsequent politicization of ontological difference. In a second move, the splitting of politics into two layers is presented as the very movement of politicization itself. In this move, the mundane affairs

of worldly politics are opened up to a style of critique in which they are taken as a symptom of the covering over of genuinely political energies, the stabilization of properly contingent forces, or the perversion of authentically robust virtues of political contestation.

Ontological interpretations of the political therefore tend to rely on what Robert Brandom has called a "layer-cake" interpretation of Heidegger's account of ontological difference.[89] This is not, as we have seen, the inflection originally given by Heidegger himself, for whom what is at stake is more like a difference between different aspects of action and intentionality. The layer-cake interpretation transforms the ontological aspect into a level that is both prior to and autonomous from the ontic layer of everyday existence. In turn, the layer-cake interpretation of the distinction between ontic and the ontological is also often used to bolster the claim that utilitarian or contemplative thought depends on a more basic, foundational level of practice.

We can pause here and ask how we should understand best the relationship between the two aspects of action that Heidegger's original account of ontological difference helps to clarify. Rather than thinking that the ontological has a conceptual priority over the ontic (and by extension, the political over politics), as if it were a separate stratum, Brandom suggests that the relationship is one of explanatory priority. By this he means that the possibility of treating things as "occurent," as present at hand, depends on understandings that are already implicit in practice. Any representational perspective on action is certainly dependent on the shape of practical, nonconceptual dealings with things. To put it another way, *knowing that* depends on *knowing how*.[90] But these aspects of acting do not belong to two wholly separate realms. They are better thought of as entangled together, as suggested in a wide range of contemporary theories of practice in social theory and philosophy. To take one example, Charles Taylor suggests that the significance of Heidegger's thought really lies in establishing that "our understanding of the world is grounded in our dealings with it."[91] Our understanding of the world is therefore based not solely on representational knowledge but also on a background of practices that can themselves be taken as objects of reflection. The task of giving what Taylor calls an "ontological account" of action is to articulate these background conditions (without presuming they can all be articulated at once). And these conditions are not something of which one is simply unaware. Background is implicit in action but is not the focal point, and aspects of it can therefore be articulated, or made explicit, in Brandom's terms, although only by other aspects being backgrounded in turn.[92]

The interpretations of ontological difference proposed by philosophers of action such as Brandom and Taylor are not the only ones available, nor are they quite the same. They are part of a live philosophical debate about how to locate Heidegger's thought within a broader field of antirepresentational accounts of embodied action, intentionality, and rationality.[93] They do help us to see that the issues raised by Heidegger's thought are central to enduring debates about how

best to understand action. In ontologies of the political, by contrast, the adoption of the layer-cake interpretation of ontological difference effectively elides any sense of rational action at all. The source of creative change is displaced either into preconceptual realms of affect or into the tectonic movements by which settled orders are suddenly disrupted. But we can see that the account of ontological difference that Heidegger presented does not necessarily need to be interpreted in the strongly contrastive, layered fashion that characterizes ontologies of the political. By restoring the concept of action to the center of discussion, it becomes possible to acknowledge that giving an ontological account of the political might involve the explication of the practices and background affirmations on which political action and knowledge depend. There is no need to presume that the pursuit of this task needs to rely on a picture of the duplicitous process by which a more fundamental level of either antagonism or commonality is covered over or erased and yet always on the verge of reasserting itself.

We should now be able to see that there are different ways of interpreting the significance of the double inscription of the political. In one direction, in strongly ontological interpretations that allude to the authority of Heidegger, there is a split between two layers, one of which is made more fundamental than the other. The resonance of this ontological interpretation of layers, levels, and priorities relies on a version of what Paul Ricoeur once famously called "the hermeneutics of suspicion": it continues to depend for its rhetorical force on revealing assumptions about the obviousness of political life that are not immediately evident.[94] The strongly ontological interpretation of the political thereby contributes to a style of analysis that distracts from a consideration of the dynamics of action. It does so by casting ordinary political life as in thrall to settled, given, obvious understandings of what matters, understandings that apparently form the very core of what it means to be a subject. I argued in chapter 2 that ordinary political life might be exactly where we should look for an understanding not so much of what the political really means but of how and why the question of the political ever comes to matter. If we orient ourselves in this second direction, then our attention alights on the task of elaborating the practical conditions shaping any instance of political action. The question remains whether the concept of the political can be of any use in this task.

Instituting the Political

We have seen how the conceptual splitting of politics into two distinct layers is associated with a consistent presentation of the political as a constitutive dimension that is both necessary for and yet itself eludes the imperatives of order. The unruly energies or groundless relations of the political are given recognizable form by a kind of tragic necessity, through an act of fixing in place that is also a betrayal

of the authentic energy of the political. In this way, ontological interpretations of the double inscription of the political generate a normative juxtaposition of two images of time and space: serialized stability and fixed order on the one hand, creative movement and disruptive becoming on the other.

The fundamental question raised by discussions of the concept of the political is whether we have to think of the constitutive relationship between processes of enframing and the actions they facilitate as visible only through a special kind of philosophical revelation. The double inscription of the political might be interpreted in less grandiose ways than those favored by Left ontologies. We could just think of the distinction between politics and the political as a highly formalized expression of a much more ordinary intuition—according to which any given pattern of political contestation involves a form of selective attention to certain issues that might always be reconfigured. This is pretty much how Dallmayr suggests we think about the distinction between politics and the political. For him, politics refers to day-to-day decision making and the practices of partisan politics and the political refers to "the frame of reference within which actions, events, and other phenomena acquire political status in the first place."[95] The importance of this more ordinary interpretation of the double inscription of the political is that it indicates a different placement of the two terms, which are no longer thought of as starkly contrasting dimensions but more as two aspects folded together in the ongoing movements of political life.

To illustrate the less grandiose interpretation of the double inscription of the political I am recommending, we might consider Habermas's diagnosis of the emergence of so-called new social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Habermas distinguished between conflicts sparked by what he called "problems of distribution" and those that concerned what he calls "the grammar of forms of life." The latter were animated, in his account, by resistance to the impingement of systems of commodification, monetization, and bureaucratization into lifeworld contexts. For Habermas, this relationship between system and lifeworld imperatives generates political mobilizations around issues of gender, race, ecology, and peace. All of these movements were not concerned with compensations or demands in the realm of the politics of distribution but instead were focused on "defending and restoring endangered ways of life."[96] The distinction that Habermas used to account for the emergence of new social movements—between conflicts arising within the sphere of the politics of distribution and those concerned with the grammar of forms of political life—is an alternative variant of the double inscription of the political that I have been tracing through this chapter. In Habermas's account, it is not a distinction mapped onto a picture of ontologically discrete layers and levels or a contrast between instituted orders and ruptures. It is a distinction that is made present as an observable element of ongoing patterns of political contestation.

Habermas provides just one example of how existing ideas of politics can be

opened up to scrutiny by placing them in a different frame and questioning what counts as political. To take another example, the reconstruction of the concept of the political is central to various strands of feminist theory.[97] The historical significance of the slogan "the personal is the political" is, after all, to expand the scope of activities considered as properly political. It is certainly not to restrict the political to a select type of heroic action.

We can, then, think of the double inscription of the political in more heuristic terms, as distinct from a strongly ontological interpretation of the double inscription of the political. By approaching concepts in a heuristic fashion, we place the emphasis on using them to help better understand "how to find things out."[98] One important reason to adopt this attitude toward different interpretations of the political is because it allows us to appreciate the ways in which these interpretations project specific imaginations of the spatial and temporal conditions of political action. This is illustrated in the heuristic use of the distinction between politics and the framing of the political found in the social theory of Roberto Unger. Unger seeks to loosen the attachment to images of crisis, ruin, and rupture in radical political thought and provides instead a revised view of the relations between stability, conflict, and change.[99] The fundamental distinction in his social theory is between *formative contexts* and *formed routines*. Unger's presentation of the distinction between these two aspects of action rejects the view of political virtue that elevates "the existentialist idea that true freedom consists in the perpetual defiance of all settled structure, in the endless flight from one context to another." For Unger, this decidedly modernist disposition "fails to take into account both the bad news that we must live and think most of the time in a context and the good news that we can create contexts that more fully respect and encourage our context-revising freedom." On the one hand, the distinction between formative contexts and routine actions is crucial to distinguishing between conflict and compromise within existing contexts and conflicts over formative contexts—or between structure-preserving and structure-transforming contexts. On the other hand, the distinction is not a stark categorical differentiation of ontological layers. Unger insists that it is important to maintain a sense of "the relativity of the distinction between context-preserving and context-breaking activities." For Unger, the animating principle is that "everything is contextual and that all contexts can be broken."[100] Change does not come in the form of events outside of closed systems or through systems rupturing under the weight of constitutive paradoxes. It arises from the ordinary dynamism of formative contexts and formed routines.

The conceptual distinction between context-dependent and context-revising aspects of action acknowledges that any given pattern of political contestation is a contingent framing that might well be altered or mutate. But it belongs to a style of theory that does not succumb to the ontological need or have recourse to the authority of philosophical revelation. The distinction is not a stark opposition

between two separate ontologically separate layers. Formative contexts of action are not invulnerable to the low-level conflicts of ordinary life, nor are they only subject to dramatic disruptions.[101] For Unger, formative contexts of action and routine activities are intimately related aspects of any field of activity. The distance between them, the degree to which ordinary moves within formed routines can also redefine those routines, varies across social formations, and it can also be taken as an index of the degree of democratization of social fields.[102]

I close this chapter by considering another strand of thought in which the concept of the political is deployed in a less melodramatic register than that found in ontological interpretations of the political. Picking up the phenomenological interpretation of the historicity of the political developed by Lefort, and also at work in Wolin and Arendt, Pierre Rosanvallon develops a form of analysis that focuses on the variable experience of politics as it is enacted through institutional formations of action. Rosanvallon's work belongs to the tradition of democratic thought associated with the critique of totalitarianism developed by thinkers like Arendt and Lefort, as well as François Furet. But it seeks to escape the traps laid for democratic theory by the antitotalitarian imagination, of defining democracy only by reference to its perversions and annulments.[103]

Rosanvallon's work rests on his own distinctive conceptualization of the political as both "a field" and "a project," in an argument structurally similar to Unger's account of formative contexts and context-revising action. Seen as a field, the political refers to the idea of living together, to the conditions of common life. But rather than presenting this field of common life as an immanent level underlying observable social realities, Rosanvallon recommends also thinking of the political as always actively in formation—as a contentious and contested project of elaborating on the dimensions of the political understood in the first sense. On the basis of this active sense of the constitution of the political through concerted action, Rosanvallon presents his own version of the distinction between the political and politics. He uses the political as a noun to refer to "a modality of existence of life in common as a form of collective action that is implicitly distinct from the functioning of politics." In a formulation similar to Wolin's, Rosanvallon uses the political to refer to matters that constitute political life "beyond the immediate field of partisan competition for political power, everyday governmental action, and the ordinary function of institutions."[104] Rosanvallon is making an analytical distinction here, without mapping it onto ontologically distinct layers. In this account, politics and the political are understood to be intimately connected rather than divided between two levels or two temporalities.

For Rosanvallon, democracy is a distinct instantiation of the political: "Democracy, in fact, constitutes the political in a field largely open to the very fact of the tensions and uncertainties that underlay it."[105] This definition leads to the idea that democracy is an "experiment in freedom," an experiment in which the question of the constitution of the political is itself up for grabs. Defining democracy in

this way, so that it is elevated to the special status of being the political form that is able to catch its own shadow by instantiating the experience of reflexivity, is in fact a broadly shared feature of radical theories of democracy.

What is most distinctive about Rosanvallon's account of democracy, compared to those of other thinkers considered in this chapter, is his emphasis on the organizational dimensions of the political. For Rosanvallon, democracy consists of concurrent processes, involving an expression of popular will as well as an institutional arrangement for the ongoing delivery of the public interest or the public good.[106] This follows from the idea that there are two inseparable aspects of the political, one of "institution" and one of "regulation."[107] These two aspects are not offset according to a temporal division in which inaugural acts of creation are followed by domestication. Rather, he uses the distinction to open up to analysis the emergence of new forms of the political. The recurring theme of Rosanvallon's work is that democracy answers to two imperatives: "it has to arrange for periodic choice among significantly different individuals and programs, and it must establish institutions that rise above those differences to promote the general interest."[108] In Rosanvallon's work, elections, voting, parties, partisan practices, administration, and law are not denigrated as mere politics or as "police." They are the necessary institutional expressions of the variable history of the political.

Rosanvallon's account of the changing forms of political life is shaped by an uneasy tension between a pessimistic sense of decline and diminution and a more neutral emphasis on the historical reconfigurations of the political. The tension plays out in his account of the emergence of what he calls "counter-democracy."[109] This idea certainly sounds a lot like postdemocracy or antipolitics. Rosanvallon uses the term "counter-democracy" to refer to the emergence of "a durable democracy of distrust." Counter-democracy finds its expression in the proliferation of powers of oversight; in new forms of monitoring, opposition, and limitation of government power; and in new practices of vigilance, denunciation, and evaluation.[110] For Rosanvallon, these are three modalities through which citizens come to exercise surveillance over power, not vice versa. They presage, for him, the emergence of new modes of legitimacy. In contrast to accounts of postdemocracy, Rosanvallon argues that in our time the sources of democratic legitimacy have proliferated and have been relocated. He identifies three new sources of legitimacy: ideals of *impartiality* (embodied in the role of the judicial system), of *reflexivity* (expressed in the oversight performed by a field of nongovernmental organizations), and of *proximity* (expressed in the proliferation of identity politics and practices of localism).[111]

The diagnosis of counter-democracy and of new forms of democratic legitimacy exemplify a distinctive type of conceptual analysis. Rosanvallon is concerned with analyzing forms of what he calls "democratic activity," not with static models or ideals or the agentless movements of ontological layers. It is a form of analysis of the political that allows for a sense of variation without necessarily

requiring a straightforward judgment that proper politics has been suspended or that real democracy has been erased. And it is a form of analysis that starts from the acknowledgement that there "has been simultaneous diversification of the *range*, *forms* and *targets* of political expression." On this basis, Rosanvallon does not find a process of depoliticization in contemporary transformations of the political. Rather than bemoaning a decline of citizenly activity, he suggests there might be an emerging problem of what he calls "the unpolitical," an idea that refers to "a failure to develop a comprehensive understanding of problems associated with the organization of a shared world."[112] We can see that Rosanvallon is, in the end, unable to resist appealing to a narrative of loss, intimating that there is a diminution of concern with responding to the calling of the political. But even here it is important to recognize that for Rosanvallon, the political refers to the problem of living together, not to an element of permanent antagonism. And more fundamentally, the political is the product of forms of action, not an ontological layer forever subject to foreclosure or exclusion. There is, for Rosanvallon, lots of democratic activity today, but much of it has nonpolitical effects in the sense that it does not contribute to an awareness of a shared world.

Rosanvallon's work represents an alternative to the prevalent interpretations of the concept of the political offered by post-Marxist and poststructuralist traditions of thought. His thought certainly shares some of the characteristics of the ontological interpretations of the political discussed earlier in this chapter and those to be considered subsequently. It has its own version of the conceptual distinction between the political and politics, although it is a distinction deployed in a less stark manner than is found elsewhere. Rosanvallon also tends to present democracy as a distinctive experiential mode of hyper-reflexivity toward the contingency of all settled formations, but he does allow that this is a more or less ordinary experience rather than a rare, sudden event of either denaturalization or political subjectification. But what is most distinctive about Rosanvallon's work is that it traces the changing experiences of the political through the history of institutions, rather than as something that is interminably suspended in a fugitive realm and is only available to the special sensitivity of philosophical reconstruction.

A Kind of Loving

In this chapter I have traced some of the routes taken along the first of Axel Honneth's two trajectories of post-Marxist social thought, the trajectory that seeks to locate transformative political possibilities in ontological features of the world. I have focused on versions of political theory that find this possibility in the very structure of ontological difference itself, by splitting politics into two parts and arranging them in a serial order of derivative priority. I have emphasized that these sorts of theories provide ontological pictures of what political life is properly

about and have discussed the way in which they often present the structure of fundamental ontology itself as the potential source of politicization.

The most important contribution of the ontological interpretation of the political is the insistence that politics should not only be thought of as a field in which preexisting interests are processed or inherited identities confront each other. It is a genre that shares with other strands of critical social theory a suspicion of forms of liberal pluralism that see politics primarily as a form of bargaining and aggregation as well as a mistrust of forms of liberal political philosophy that suppose that political argument needs to be contained within preestablished parameters. In both cases, the radical democratic spirit balks at how such traditions ignore or control for the ways in which political activity is transformative of interests and issues, as well as identities and solidarities, and it seeks to reaffirm that politics is a generative and constitutive activity in its own right.

The animating concern that often links various ontological interpretations of the political is a commitment to recovering the force of conflict, controversy, and uncertainty that liberal political theories and actually existing liberal democracy are both accused of erasing from view. One way of thinking about this accusation is that it amounts to a claim that some theories, and some thinkers, are unable or unwilling to love politics enough or to love it in the way that it deserves to be loved.[113] Liberalism, after all, is often seen not only as too rationalistic but also as actively hostile to passionate forms of public expression. The affective force of ontologies of the political lies precisely here, in the proposition that one should be willing to abandon oneself to the dizziness of the ambivalence and delights of the rough-and-tumble that makes politics what it is. The compromising, trimming, and withholding characteristic of liberal theories are, from this perspective, expressions of lukewarm embrace when what is called for is wholehearted abandonment.

But in this demand that we should love politics more fully, proponents of the political turn out to be more prescriptive than those they suppose are not passionate enough. Strong ontological claims about the political tend to be used to bolster very particular understandings of how democracy *should be* defined. These are understandings that sometimes appeal to more or less antiquarian etymologies of the word "democracy" or that sometimes appeal to more or less convincing claims about the fundamental essence of the political. The ontologization of politics also depends on strong claims about just how the conceptualization of politics itself should be conducted, privileging the recall of lost or forgotten meanings covered over by the rationalisms of modernity. And so, almost by definition, observable political practices are always likely to fall short of what is required to qualify as proper politics in the refined and rather precious sense associated with ontologies of the political. From the perspective of these ontologies, democracy comes to serve as the utopian name for a style of politics in which the authentically disruptive energy of the political should be allowed to play itself out without reserve.

In considering different examples of the use of the politics/political distinction, I have also sought resources to support the second of Honneth's two theoretical trajectories, the one that seeks to better understand plural rationalities of action. We have seen that there are significant differences within what is often presented as a rather homogenous field of thinking about the concept of the political. First, I have suggested that there is a significant difference between strongly ontological interpretations of the concept of the political, sometimes heavily dependent on a politicized reading of Heidegger's account of ontological difference, and accounts of the political that are more concerned with understanding the dynamics of human action. This first difference of interpretation does not exactly map onto a second one, although they do overlap in places. This second difference is that between what Oliver Marchart calls associative and dissociative interpretations of the political.[114] One thing that thinkers such as Wolin, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, and Rosanvallon all share is an understanding of the political as a realm in which the conditions of collective action and common life are most at stake. This emphasis contrasts with the darker emphasis on interminable struggle and hostility found in other accounts of the political, to which I will turn in more detail in the next two chapters. I should say here that this second difference is not a matter of a contrast between consensus and discord. It is, rather, a difference in how issues of agonism are interpreted—a difference in how the idealistic and realistic aspects of politics identified by Hannah Pitkin are combined in different theoretical traditions. And it is, as we will see, a difference in thinking about the shape of political time and space. Finally, it is a difference to do with contrasting ways of imagining the public milieu in which theoretical reflection itself circulates.

We have, then, begun to see how a fundamental division emerges over just how to interpret the relationship between given identities and interests, and the transformative work of politics. In Lefort's work, in Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's account of the retreat of the political, and in Rosanvallon's work one finds a concern with elaborating on the political as a particular type of experience. This concern reflects a shared focus on developing a phenomenological account of the conditions of political life. The next chapter will elaborate further on this interpretative division as it shapes poststructuralist theories of radical democracy.

CHAPTER 4

The Scandal of Consent

> *The consent which underlies reproduction of capitalist relations does not consist of individual states of mind but of behavioral characteristics of organizations*. It should be understood not in psychological or moral terms. Consent is *cognitive* and *behavioral*. Social actors, individual and collective, do not march around filled with "predispositions" which they simply execute. Social relations constitute structures of choices within which people perceive, evaluate, and act. *They consent when they choose particular courses of action and when they follow these choices in their practices*.
>
> **—Adam Przeworski**

Democracy and Ideology

The previous chapter raised the question of how the concept of the political should be interpreted in theories of democracy. One key difference of interpretation is captured in Hannah Pitkin's distinction between the idealist and realist dimensions of political life and also in Oliver Marchart's distinction between associative and dissociative concepts of the political. The distinction at stake is not simply one between more consensual or more agonistic perspectives. It is, rather, a distinction that turns on different ways of understanding the dynamics of conflict and discord. Understood in this way, the difference of interpretation is closely related to another difference, one that separates strongly ontological views of the double inscription of politics from more phenomenologically inflected views. While for the former the political refers to a layer of antagonism, energy, or vitalism that might always be unleashed against settled orders, from the latter perspective it appears more like a horizon of experience within which political action comes into view.

In this chapter and the next I will further refine these differences of interpretation. In chapter 5 I will accentuate the differences between ontologically inclined and action-theoretic perspectives in order to specify the very different understand-

ings of the sources of antagonism that are available to us. But first, in this chapter, I emphasize the difference between these two perspectives in order to restore to view the importance of experience to understanding the emergent dynamics of democratic politics. In particular, I open up to scrutiny the taken-for-granted emphasis on concepts of subjectification that has come to define radical theories of democracy under sway of the strongly ontological interpretation of the political discussed in the previous chapter. I suggest that the ascendency of the vocabulary of political subjectification marks the eclipse of an alternative emphasis on the conditions of creative action that a phenomenological imagination keeps in view.

My discussion starts by focusing on how the concept of hegemony has served post-Marxist thinkers as a means of thinking about democracy in the wake of the collapse of classical paradigms of class politics. The notion of consent is central to debates about hegemony; these debates are in turn one of the places where the Marxist tradition more or less consciously engages with a key concept of democratic theory. The defining theme in Western Marxism from the 1920s onward has been how to understand the means by which capitalist exploitation is legitimized through the active consent of those who are the main sources of economic value and therefore the primary victims of injustice.[1] The absence of widespread political upheaval against capitalism is attributed to the operations of ideology, which is seen to operate through sophisticated theories of subject formation.

In the work of Louis Althusser a lineage of Marxist theories of ideology is translated into a theory of social reproduction mediated by subjectification. Combining Lacanian psychoanalytical theory with Antonio Gramsci's account of hegemony, Althusser recast the concept of ideology in ways that still resonate across the disparate field of cultural theory. He argues that ideology is something that people could never be liberated from. It is the necessary mechanism through which individuals are made into subjects. The formation of subjectivity works through institutional practices overseen by churches, schools, and universities, which Althusser labels "ideological state apparatuses." Althusser defines ideology as the "representation of the imaginary relationships to their real conditions of existence."[2] "Imaginary" in this formulation refers to the idea, derived from Jacques Lacan, that the relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence is always necessarily mediated by the images with which they identify in the process of becoming subjects.

As already noted, Althusser's theory of ideology, with its differentiation of repressive state apparatuses from ideological state apparatuses, is a reformulation of Gramsci's account of hegemony. Gramsci's singular contribution to Marxist theories of culture and politics was to split the "superstructure" into two distinct dimensions, or levels: "the one that can be called 'civil society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private', and that of 'political society' or 'the State.' The distinction between civil society and political society corresponds to the function of 'hegemony' that dominant groups exercise throughout society on the one

hand, and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' exercised through the State and 'juridical' government."[3] The distinction between political society and civil society allows Gramsci to develop a dual perspective, emphasizing the role of both relations of coercion and relations of consent in political processes. And it underwrites a whole series of related conceptual pairs, including persuasion and force, morality and politics, hegemony and dictatorship, and leadership and domination.

Althusser's account of ideological state apparatuses carries over Gramsci's distinction between two modalities of power but lays the basis for a generalized analysis of cultural practices as mediums of subject formation. The traces of Althusser's account of ideology are still evident in contemporary theories of culture, discourse, governmentality, and hegemony. His account resonates in a broad agreement that subjectivity turns on a double operation, through which individuals become subjects of their own actions in the process of being subordinated to the authority of a higher, external power.[4]

The history of critical theories of cultural analysis developed in the wake of Althusser's reformulation of ideology is, in no small part, the history of the displacement of action-centered theories by theories that prioritize the formation of subjectivity in scenes of subjection. As we saw in chapter 1, it is also here that the roots of an ambivalent theory of democracy can be located. Roland Barthes finds a specific political imagination to be at work in Saussure's account of the arbitrariness of the sign, which is a crucial reference point for the development of theories of culture as the medium of subject formation. For Barthes, Saussure presents meaning as wholly conventional, anchored not by transcendental authority but only by the agreement of all members of a community. And yet no single individual is empowered to change the system, since this can happen only through a strange form of unintentional collective action.[5] This account of meaning has come to serve as the model for a wide range of theories of culture: culture is widely understood as a field in which power is exercised over subjects but also therefore as a field where power can be resisted and potentially transformed by working on inherited forms of subjective identification.

It is possible to use concepts from linguistics and other specialized fields as models of political action only by translating them in more or less unmediated form into ontological categories of subjectivity, desire, or motivation.[6] Such a move leaves us trapped within a view in which the subject is an effect of the play of signs and representations or requires us to affirm the unpredictable and anonymous agency of an affective layer of prior determination. Cultural theory is not the only field in which it is assumed that cultural practices are instrumental in the formation of subjectivity and, through this, necessary for the reproduction of relationships of unequal and unjust power. The same assumption is a central feature of post-Marxist theories of the political that are a focus of this chapter. Part of the attraction of poststructuralist theories of radical democracy and ideas

such as Rancière's notion of "the distribution of the sensible" lies in the idea that whole social formations are functionally integrated around the operations of subject formation, through which macrolevel processes are secured at the level of microlevel identifications. This chapter traces the consequences of the elision of questions of consent in radical theories of democracy that view power as primarily working at the level of processes of subjectification. I seek to trace an alternative trajectory through this conceptual terrain, one in which questions of consent are kept alive by being made central to an understanding of democratic politics as the problematization of relations of delegation, dependence, and support.

Taking Democracy Seriously

The concept of hegemony serves as a kind of staging post through which Marxist theorists have often passed en route to thinking about democratic politics. In this respect, what is important about Gramsci's elaboration of the concept of hegemony is that he "unwittingly recovered the natural law meaning of civil society as a society founded on consensus."[7] There is a fundamental division in how the theme of consent in Gramsci's original discussion of hegemony has subsequently been interpreted. One strand of interpretation, which would include cultural theorists such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, takes relations of consent seriously. A second strand of interpretation is deeply skeptical of the idea of consent that is so central to Gramsci's own account of hegemony. For example, any space for a meaningful model of consent falls from view in Althusser's transposition of Gramsci's original division of the superstructure into two parts. Hegemony disappears into a process of ideological interpellation in which individuals are constituted all the way down as subjects, through scenes of subjection to external authority. From an avowedly Althusserian perspective, Gramsci's toying with the idea of consent as well as force is a regrettable theoretical error.[8]

To appreciate the degree to which Gramsci's account of hegemony is premised on a theory of motivated, rational action, it is useful to call attention to his intellectual debt to a tradition of Italian spatial linguistics in which relations of status and emulation are used to explain language change.[9] Gramsci's interest lay in an appreciation of how this tradition demonstrates that cultural change involves "a whole complex of molecular processes."[10] The relevance of Gramsci's engagement with spatial linguists in developing his account of hegemony is that they provided him with a picture of action being undertaken against a background of expectations: "Rather than by means of direct imposition, the spatial linguists saw change as being effected by the operation of prestige on the one hand and active consent on the other."[11] Gramsci does not therefore reduce the aspect of consent to an ideological ruse or to a "sleight of hand."[12] His account of hegemony opens up to investigation the role of norms in orienting actions. Any affirmation of hegemony

as an ongoing process really makes sense only if it is understood in these terms, as a process of configuring possible alternative pathways of action.

The implication of this action-centered interpretation is that hegemony must somehow express people's interests and aspirations if it is ever to be effective. Gramsci makes the point clearly enough himself when he insists that in establishing hegemony "the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups."[13] In one sense, this is a statement about how any group must combine with others to pursue their own interests. But more strongly, it also suggests an understanding in which hegemony cannot "perform its function of coordinating individual wills unless it is validated continually by daily life."[14] The idea here is that hegemony must touch on people's experiences and expectations if it is to orient their actions. This is why we might prefer to use the term "consent" over "legitimacy," to avoid the mentalist associations of the latter, which tend to undermine the emphasis on strategies and forms of action that the idea of hegemony implies. Emphasizing the action-theoretic aspects of Gramsci's ideas also provides the key to appreciating the abiding significance for democratic theory of Stuart Hall's engagement with Gramsci's ideas of hegemony and the national-popular in his analysis of Thatcherism in the 1970s and 1980s. Hall presents hegemony as a field of strategic interaction between situated purposive actors. He is often thought of primarily as a theorist of culture, or perhaps of cultural politics. Here I read Hall as primarily a theorist of electoral-representative democracy.

The background for Hall's treatment of concepts of hegemony, discourse, and ideology was a set of historical transformations in the structures of electoral representation and party mobilization in British politics.[15] Hall's work, as part of the collective project associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham in the 1970s and then at the Open University, was embedded in a broader series of academic debates about the need for Marxist theory to "take democracy seriously."[16] The debates in which Hall intervened in this period were concerned primarily with theorizing political strategy and with finding resources for doing so in a context in which electoral democracy was the presumed object and medium of popular mobilization. The research programs of nascent cultural studies in the 1970s and 1980s analyzed a broad set of institutions pivotal to postwar British social democracy, conceptualizing them as the sites of civil society. It was in civil society—in schools, in broadcast cultures, in welfare systems—that the hegemonic processes were to be found, understood as processes of winning consent but not securing consensus.[17] For Hall, Gramsci's "analysis of situations" is the source for a type of conjunctural analysis of the relationships between political regimes, state forms, and popular trends that rejects the image of the imposition or legitimation of domination. Hall assumes that understanding these relationships requires recognizing that the exercise of hegemony results "from winning a substantial degree of popular consent."[18]

Hall's interpretation of Gramsci's ideas is distinctive because of its twin emphases on hegemony as an organized phenomenon and as necessarily articulated with popular experiences and sentiments. This dual dimension of hegemony is central to Hall's well-known account of the emergence of Thatcherism as a version of authoritarian populism. Hall's analysis of Thatcherism in British politics can be thought of as an account of cultural politics only insofar as it is understood to refer to the ways in which popular sentiments and discords are articulated with public narratives that end up being electorally consequential. In intellectual debates of the 1980s, Hall's account of Thatcherism was accused of overestimating both the popularity of Margaret Thatcher as a political leader and the importance of ideology in determining political outcomes.[19] But the accusation failed to acknowledge how Hall consistently took a distance from increasingly assertive discourse-theoretical models in which hegemony is understood as a process of producing new subjectivities.[20] Hall's insistence on the idea of popular morality as the field in which class is experienced certainly sounds empiricist. It also indicates a continuing investment in the concept of experience, a concept that was then being rapidly effaced under the weight of theoretically sophisticated accounts of the interpellation of subjects through discourse.

Hall's argument is that the recurring mistake of left-wing parties, politicians, and academics is to presume that hegemonic strategies are "ideological" in the double sense of being about the false beliefs inculcated in subject populations. In fundamental respects, Hall's account of the cultural politics of authoritarian populism in the United Kingdom is premised on the proposition that hegemonic strategies are not, in fact, ideological at all. He insists that the effectiveness of New Right discourses of crime and delinquency and moral decline in the 1970s lay in the fact that these themes "touch the direct experience, the anxieties and uncertainties of ordinary people" and that they are therefore best understood as articulating "the real material sources of popular discontent."[21] Hall's originality was to argue that winning consent is a matter of harnessing popular discontents.

Hall proposes that the consent won through organized efforts at constructing hegemony cannot be considered either a mere sham or a wholly contingent discursive construct: "Thatcherism's 'populism' signals its unexpected ability to harness to its project certain popular discontents, to cut across and between the different divisions in society and to connect with certain aspects of popular experience." Hall argues that Thatcherism, understood as an emergent hegemonic project, articulated shared experiences that were felt and sensed in the everyday lives of large numbers of people. The insistence on the role of experience is an index of the degree to which Hall's own account of Thatcherism depends on his taking democracy seriously as the political form through which authoritarian populism emerged. In Hall's account, the rise of Thatcherism emphatically established that ideology was *not* a determinant factor in the success of right-wing politics in Britain in the 1980s: "If nobody was prospering under Thatcherism,

ideology alone could not parachute such an 'illusion' into the heads of the majority. However, if some people are doing well—as they are, especially, in personal terms, in the 'South'—and the ideological climate is right, and the alternative ways of measuring how 'well' you are doing are effectively silenced or stigmatized, then the small number who define themselves as 'doing well' will be swelled by a much larger number who identify with this way of 'getting on.'"[22] In Hall's account, consent is actively sought and perhaps even won insofar as hegemonic projects succeed in articulating public narratives that express the felt experiences and popular discontents of segments of a population. It should also be said that consent, for Hall, is not equivalent to consensus.

Hall's account of Thatcherism is, it is worth remembering, an account of the cultural dynamics of electoral competition in liberal democracies. But crucially, the cultural aspects of his account do not depend on a totalizing account of the production of subjectivity. Hall presents culture as the medium in which everyday familiarities with institutions, labor markets, and political processes give rise to popular sentiments of expectation and discontent. Rather than assuming that Hall's account of hegemony belongs naturally to a tradition of cultural theories of subjectification, we can therefore more usefully place it alongside contemporaneous theorizations of Thatcherism as a hegemonic project that combined the *politics of power* and the *politics of support*.[23] In terms of this analytical distinction, Hall's account of Thatcherism established the grounds for the analysis of a new politics of support in postimperial Britain from the 1960s.[24] This was a politics shaped by the disruptions of the permissive society, inequities of welfare, the end of deference, the democratization of everyday life, and experiences of living in a multicultural society—all giving rise to what Ralph Miliband dubbed "a state of de-subordination," a process that had diffuse sources and unpredictable political consequences.[25]

To make clear the significance for my own argument of restoring to view Hall's concern with the experiential conditions of action, it is useful to acknowledge that debates about Thatcherism in the 1980s remain a key source of contemporary academic conceptualizations of neoliberalism and neoliberalization.[26] Debates about these concepts are, however, overwhelmingly concerned with the politics of power, focusing primarily on control of the organs of state and policy making. They have much thinner accounts of the politics of support. When this matter is addressed, the default mode of argument is to fall back on functionalist ideas about elite-led politics, in which policy is ascribed remarkable determinant power as a mode of "governmentality." As a result, the politics of support is conceptualized instrumentally, as an automatic effect of the production of new types of "neoliberal subjects." The prevalence of this style of theoretical narrative is itself an indication of the degree to which Hall's account of the cultural politics of support has been marginalized by the rise of theories of signification, discourse, and governmentality that can find no space for the account of popular experiences that

Hall developed. Hall's own later reflections on neoliberalism are certainly marked by a rather pessimistic sense of the all-encompassing presence of neoliberal ideas and dispositions in early twentieth-century Britain. But here, too, the analytical emphasis is on the ways in which ideological concepts find a foothold in popular consciousness only because they articulate with longstanding features of both common sense and good sense, the political significance of which always remains open for rearticulation.[27]

Hall's most singular contribution to theories of radical democracy is therefore to have taken seriously the problem of how consent works and to have done so without reducing consent to a refraction of coercion mediated through the dynamics of subjectification.[28] Hall's account of the cultural politics of hegemony revolves around an acknowledgement of the abiding importance of electoral politics. I have emphasized this aspect of his work to underscore the degree to which it contains an action-theoretic account of political life. The point of affirming politically that hegemony is something that has to be constructed and constantly sustained—that it has to be "won," not just "reproduced"—carries weight only if it acknowledges that the concept of hegemony rests on the assumption that there is scope for creative agency among situated actors. Once we recognize this aspect of Hall's account of hegemony, we can reconsider the significance of a second translation of Gramsci's ideas into a theory of democratic politics. I want to suggest that the avenues of theoretical curiosity laid down by the account of radical democracy developed in the mid-1980s by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe helped to close off the more open-ended inquiries suggested by Hall's style of conjunctural analysis.

The Vicissitudes of Hegemony

Hall's account of Thatcherism as a form of "authoritarian populism" draws explicitly on the conceptualization of populism originally developed in the 1970s by Ernesto Laclau. Laclau's account of populism is guided by the challenge of defining the "specificity of the political" as it is understood in Althusserian variants of Marxist and post-Marxist theory. This task was premised on the idea that it was necessary to move beyond "the empirical plane."[29] In contrast to the concern of Wolin, Arendt, Pitkin, and others to define the political against the utilitarianism of political science, in the Althusserian milieu the primary concern is to carve out a space of at the very least "relative autonomy" from economic determination for "political practice."[30]

According to Laclau, populism is the process of articulating class with non-class social relations such as nationalism and ethnicity. Populism is, in this account, not just a political form that makes reference to "the people," but a kind of collective interpellation that sets the people or the popular against a dominant bloc.[31] While

Laclau's original account of populism is directed at opening up Marxist political analysis to non-class relations, his analysis of the politics of populism depends on an important theoretical sleight of hand. On the one hand, "class" continues to have a precise conceptual definition at a high level of abstraction, developed in relation to Marxist concepts of the relations of production and the technical division of labor. On the other, "the people" is ambiguous because Laclau claims that the concept lacks this type of precise referent. He then maps the definitional ambiguity ascribed to non-class social cleavages onto the work that populism does in the world, as a means of drawing together different interests.[32] The strategic work that populist discourse is meant to be able to do in sustaining hegemony is, then, derived from a theoretical analysis in which "the people" cannot achieve the same level of abstract conceptual clarity as "class."

It is Laclau's model of populism that Hall developed in his account of Thatcherism as a form of right-wing populism offset against a social democratic status quo. However, Laclau's own analysis has little concern with the issues of consent so central to Hall's analysis of Thatcherism. It is instead embedded in the conceptual vocabulary of interpellation. In Althusser's original account, ideological interpellation is the mode in which individuals are provided with identities and speaking positions that secure "obviousnesses as obviousnesses."[33] The concept of interpellation holds that there are various mechanisms through which subjects are produced as if they are autonomous individuals.

Debates in the 1970s about the significance of antiessentialist Marxism formed the backdrop of Laclau and Mouffe's elaboration of a theory of radical democracy in the 1980s, one part of flourishing and often contentious intellectual debates about the "New Times" ushered in by the ascendance of New Right policies and politics, the end of the Cold War, and the onset of globalization.[34] Among the key legacies of these debates was a deep suspicion of the view of politics as a process undertaken by actors in pursuit of interests that are derived directly from objective class positions. The idea of "relative autonomy" was steadily supplanted by attempts to account for the complete autonomy of politics from external determinations.[35] Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* is in large part a genealogy of the concept of hegemony in Marxist political thought, and the concept of democracy developed in the book is highly dependent on the recurring dilemmas derived from that tradition.[36] The break with that tradition that Laclau and Mouffe make is their rejection of the idea that political relations are relations of representation, the assumption that underwrites Leninist notions of substitutionism and the vanguard party. Laclau and Mouffe replace the logic of representation with the logic of articulation, in which relations between agents are a result of political construction and struggle among dissimilar elements rather than an expression of underlying commonality.

The starting point for the argument presented in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* is a narrative of the multiplication of the sites of political struggle. According to

Laclau and Mouffe, the "extension of social conflictuality to a wide range of areas" requires the development of a politics of radical democracy, one that abandons the privileging of the revolutionary class subject.[37] In making this argument, they make use of the concept of antagonism, which is central to the Marxist traditions' analysis of class struggle, but they detatch it fully from any residual economism. Antagonism is understood as the generative ontological source of politics, where politics is the explicit formulation of social relations as relations of subordination.[38] In this understanding, antagonism can be produced by commodification of social needs, by intervention of state bureaucracies, or by cultural leveling or destruction, and not necessarily and always with reference to positions in the production system.

At first, then, the concept of antagonism in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* appears as part of what seems like an empirical claim about multiple sources of conflict and the need to theorize the conditions for alliance formation. But quickly the concept acquires an ontological status as the very limit of the social. Antagonism is used to name a particular kind of relation, not one of contradiction in which the terms of the relation are fully themselves but a relation whose terms are inherently incomplete. It is a usage based on an analogy from Lacanian psychoanalysis, in which the presence of the Other "prevents me from being totally myself." According to Laclau and Mouffe, "antagonism is the failure of difference."[39] They mean by this that it is a form of relation that undoes all stable ways of relating selves and others. Antagonism therefore marks "the limit of all objectivity," in the sense that it is the point at which the possibility of the negation of objective relations is exposed.[40]

We can see that antagonism is the name for whatever threatens the integrity of the self and the social. It appears as a kind of quasi-transcendental condition of (im)possibility of the social. It is a figure for the very groundlessness of modernity itself, it turns out, insofar as antagonism "escapes the possibility of being apprehended in language," because apparently "language only exists as an attempt to fix that which antagonism subverts."[41] The fundamental point of this strongly ontological conceptualization of antagonism is to disallow any and all appeal to experience or social facts in explaining political conflict.

Laclau and Mouffe's argument in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* retains a widely held culturalist emphasis on thinking of social formations ideologically, that is, as tied together through the constitution of subjectivities at the level of meaning. The ontological account of antagonism is connected to a distinction between two logics of relationality that form the crux of Laclau and Mouffe's democratic theory. They describe two modes of structuring political space, one based on a principle of equivalence and the other on the principle of difference. The first simplifies political space by dividing it into two antagonistic camps; this involves developing chains of equivalence across groups and antagonisms. On the other hand, what they call a democratic subject position is based on the logic of differ-

ence, where the social is not divided in two but is made more complex. Whereas the former implies a politics of rupture, in the form of "popular struggles," the logic of difference implies a politics of adjustment. Democratic struggles, Laclau and Mouffe argue, do not divide political space into two; they involve instead a lessening of "the charge of negativity" associated with antagonism.[42]

Having deduced these different modes of political articulation from an ontology of antagonism, Laclau and Mouffe then mapped this distinction onto a geopolitical divide between "advanced industrial societies" and "the periphery of the capitalist world." In the latter, their argument goes, the starkness of domination and exploitation endow popular struggles with a clearly defined enemy. They argue that popular struggles "only occur in the case of relations of extreme exteriority between the dominant groups and the rest of the community."[43] In the West, they proposed, the proliferation of points of antagonism is played out in the multiplication of democratic struggles without coalescing around "the people" through relations of equivalence, set off against a clearly defined antagonist. The multiplication of democratic positions has therefore diluted the automatic unity of political opposition around a popular pole. In short, the very historical success of democratic struggles in the West has reduced the space for the emergence of popular struggles. The multiplication of points of antagonism is in this way presented as a function of a "modernity" that remains located squarely in the "mature" capitalist world.

Laclau and Mouffe therefore reject the idea that antagonisms automatically generate popular struggles and suggest instead that such struggles might in fact be a relatively rare occurrence. They retain as a theoretical possibility the development of an "expansive hegemony" through chains of equivalence, that is, for popular struggles to develop from democratic struggles. But they suggest that the conditions for this transformation have become historically much more difficult. In fact, they view the political consequences of populist modes of struggle with great suspicion in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, precisely because they imply the negation by the ascendant grouping of the other party to a dispute. This ambivalence is further developed in Laclau's later work, in which he presents populism as the consummate form of politics. All political movements will contain a populist element, because they will interpellate "the people" against an adversary or enemy. Populism, in this account, fills and reconciles the "empty space" Lefort identifies as constitutive of political life itself. And for Laclau, herein lays the potential for populism to devolve into the negation of politics.[44]

We can see, then, that there are two registers at work in Laclau and Mouffe's ontology of the social in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, from which they deduce an account of radical democratic politics. First is a general account of the social as a system of differences with no fixed meaning, and therefore always open to the possibility of struggle. Societies are, on their view, constituted by the repression

of the impossibility of objectivity. In the general account of the social, hegemony is understood as a process of suturing, borrowing again from Lacanian psychoanalysis. The analogy underwrites the claim that the social is structured around a lack: "Hegemonic practices are suturing insofar as their field of operation is determined by the openness of the social, by the ultimately unfixed character of every signifier. This original lack is precisely what the hegemonic practices try to fill in."[45] Hegemony is here the name for a necessary impulse toward closure that is finally impossible.

The second register is a historical one, which reinforces the ontology of closure and suturing with a narrative that provides the democratic content for the claim that hegemony is the mode of instituting the social. Appealing to Lefort's antitotalitarian narrative of modernity in the West, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the "democratic revolution" enables relations of subordination that constitute the role of serf, slave, or worker to be transformed into relations of oppression, that is, transformed into sites of antagonism. The discursive registers for this transformation are provided by the historical inauguration of democracy after the French Revolution in 1789: "Our thesis is that it is only from the moment when the democratic discourse becomes available to articulate the different forms of resistance to subordination that the conditions will exist to make possible the struggle against different types of inequality."[46] The claim here is not just that democracy provides a discursive register of equality and liberty in which reflexive relations of subordination can be translated into relations of oppression around which people can be mobilized. It extends to the much stronger proposition that the constitutive movement of nonclosure and antagonism is now the imaginary horizon that institutes society itself. Radical democracy is, in this account, the further radicalization of the West's democratic revolution through the deepening and extension of the egalitarian imagination.

Identifying the two registers at work in Laclau and Mouffe's account of radical democracy—one ontological, one historical—allows us to see how the family of concepts they develop tends to have both a descriptive and normative aspect. For example, democracy is the political form in which the ontological contingency of the foundations of the social is made explicit. Radical democracy is a politics that self-consciously mobilizes this feature of democracy for further egalitarian ends. Democracy as hegemony necessarily attempts to secure "a definitive suture," but in so doing denies "the radically open character of the social which is instituted by democracy."[47] In this formulation, hegemony becomes the name for an object of analysis understood as a process of articulations and contingent suturings. But it is also presented as a model of strategic organization and mobilization. Laclau and Mouffe are recommending that politics *should* be pursued in this hegemonic spirit. Likewise, notions of articulation, of antagonism as the limit of the social, and of hegemony as the necessary suturing of foundational contingency are all

presented as ontological generalities. But they also serve as the basis for arguments about forms of political struggle in which reflexivity toward these conditions is presented as the normatively favored option.[48]

Laclau and Mouffe's account of radical democracy stands as the perfect example of the ontologization of the political. It finds in a theoretical account of the wholly contingent foundations of the social the much-sought-after principle of negativity that proves that transformative political action is still possible, even after the idea of a universal bearer of revolutionary energy has been abandoned. But the account of hegemony they develop is actually shorn of any consideration of the problem of consent that concerned Hall in his account of hegemony. Relationships between force and consent are instead transubstantiated into the semiotic play of differential deferral and closure. The paradoxical model of democracy that Barthes found to be implicit in Saussure's theory of the sign therefore finds its purest realization in the theory of radical democracy as hegemony, a theory that combines the affirmation of absolute contingency with the evacuation of any scope for motivated, rational action.

The Closures of Radical Democracy

In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe lay the basis for an influential conceptualization of political life as a set of contingent relations held together by the force of "discourse." Their achievement was therefore to generate an empirical methodology of discourse analysis, one that focuses on the deployment of "empty signifiers" in political practices.[49] Empty signifiers are those terms that tie specific struggles and demands into chains of equivalence.[50] In this understanding, the political is modeled on mythological systems involving a succession of divine names: "Like mystical fullness, political fullness needs to be named in terms deprived, as much as possible, of any positive content."[51] Understood as empty signifiers, concepts such as freedom, the people, order, or democracy function as contingent universals around which disparate struggles are temporarily aligned.

In an important sense, this version of radical democracy does not actually rely on a theory of discourse at all, at least not if we think of discourse as a doing word. It actually provides a theory of politics as a practice of naming. Laclau and Mouffe present politics as so many acts of nomination that have their own interpellative force. They assume that individual and collective identities are constructed around names.[52] It is an account of "discourse" derived from a specific interpretation of Lacan's suggestion that the subject is formed by a "lack"—not of any specific thing or object that a subject might want to have but a lack of being itself, a kind groundlessness that generates a restlessly displaced desire that can never be fully satisfied. For Lacan, this is the dynamic played out in the dialogic encounter between analyst and analysand.[53] The poststructuralist account of rad-

ical democracy takes this theme and transposes it into a generic model in which subject formation works through the temporary fixing of meaning by identification with abstract nouns. In turn, this image is taken to be a good analogy for the formation of group identities and of whole social fields. There is no space left in this interpretation of "discourse" for the type of relational analysis of the formation of hegemony along the lines developed by Hall, with its apparently naïve notion of experience. For Hall, experience is discursive in the sense that it is necessarily shared with others. Instead, in Laclau and Mouffe's work one finds an explicit disavowal of the validity of the concept of experience, on the rather shaky grounds that "all experience depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility."[54] In this elevation of psychoanalytic and linguistic concepts, the idea of articulation itself undergoes a transformation, away from the sense in which Hall used it to refer to the shared forms of expression available to situated actors and toward a sense of joining disparate elements together and fixing them in place.[55]

The image of hegemony as a process of suturing together fluid relations by fixing meaning around proper names depends on a spatial imagination that opposes fixity and closure to fluidity and openness. This imagination is a basic feature of a much broader field of poststructuralist theory. In elaborating on the political implications of radical democracy, Laclau once explicitly contrasted space—understood as a mode of fixing, freezing, and closure—to time—understood in terms of fluidity, movement, and dislocation.[56] In response, Doreen Massey argued that Laclau's contrast relied not so much on the difference between space and time but on the difference between two notions of time: time as genuine dynamism and time as mere repetition (which is what Laclau presents as space).[57] Massey's own project of elaborating a notion of "spatial politics" relies on positing an alternative ontology. Her ontology seeks to free the concept of space from its theoretical subordination to the chain "stasis/representation/closure," in favor of thinking of space in relation to "openness/unrepresentability/external multiplicity."[58] Massey's alternative account therefore holds fast to an ontological style of argument even as it changes the terms of evaluation of key concepts. Space is no longer understood simply as mere extension or as a field. It is understood conjuncturally, as the sphere of meeting up, of coexistence, of the unexpected and unpredictable. In this way of thinking, space takes on a privileged status as the very site of politics, "as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity."[59] The same slippage between ontology and normativity evident in Laclau and Mouffe's theory of radical democracy therefore also appears in Massey's theory of spatial politics. An argument that starts out by giving an ontological account of the qualities of relational space turns out also to provide the model of a normatively favored style of relating to and across difference.

The shared style of argument by ontology in poststructuralist accounts of radical democracy belongs to a broader intellectual culture that equates genuine political action with the formal possibility of reconstituting the conditions of meaning

itself. It is one part of a structure of theoretical feeling that revolves around the idea that authentic political life is expressed in the formation and disruption of orders and frames and that the task of critical analysis is to reveal the contingency of foundations and the uncertainty of given meanings. The master metaphor of this style of political thought is that of blindness and insight: whether inflected by a vocabulary of constitutive outsides, constitutive lacks, suturings, or partitions of the sensible, the constant theme is the idea that orderly systems are secured through the expulsion or marginalization of a term that in turn might be used to reorder them in new ways.

The spatialized interpretation of the concept of the political finds its clearest expression in the influential account of democracy developed by Jacques Rancière. Rancière hardens the division between politics in its proper sense and the commonsense idea of politics as a mode of government, a regime, or a way of life—the arena of "police," in Rancière's terms.[60] Rancière's political thought has a different intellectual trajectory than those discussed already, tracing a route out of Althusserian Marxism not via the concept of hegemony but through a reconstruction of the aesthetic conditions of subjectivity. Rancière's vision of democracy is therefore quite distinct from that of Lefort, which is carried over by Laclau and Mouffe, in which democracy is a modern innovation haunted by the possibility of totalitarianism. Democracy, for Rancière, is instead an ancient practice that occasionally reappears through temporary ruptures of instituted "police" orders. Rancière is the source of a view of space as the very medium for the constitution of police orders, and in turn the scene for acts of disruption through which proper politics finds expression.[61]

Rancière's version of the splitting of politics into two dimensions provides a straightforward expression of the political imagination that contrasts closed systems and intrusive interruptions. It an understanding of politics that remains faithful to a revolutionary imaginary, only one now shorn of its totalizing ambition but still holding fast to the idea of societies as functionally integrated, enclosed totalities. What is genuinely distinctive about Rancière's account of radical democracy is that the process of ordering is understood not by reference to an image of semiotic closure or symbolic framing but rather in terms of what he calls the "partition of the sensible." In this understanding, democratic politics is the transformation of "the sensory self-evidence of the 'natural' order that destines specific individuals and groups to occupy positions of rule or of being ruled, assigning them to private or public lives, pinning them down to a certain time and space, to specific 'bodies,' that is to specific ways of being, seeing and saying."[62] The idea that politics is a process of challenging and transforming the processes that assign people to positions in a social order has a long pedigree in radical cultural thought. Rancière's version of this idea presents proper politics as nothing short of an aesthetic experience in which subjectivity itself is both undone and given new foundations.

In the next section I elucidate key aspects of Rancière's political thought. His account of democratic politics crystallizes defining features of what I have called the ontological interpretation of the political while containing traces of an alternative interpretation that I will further discuss in part 3. While it shares certain characteristics with other ontological interpretations of the political, Rancière's work is marked by a much more explicit focus on the ways in which politics is shaped by felt experiences of injustice. This emphasis on the motivations of political action is, however, subsumed beneath a vocabulary of subjectification and disidentification, so that authentic politics is finally reduced to the punctual eruption of insurgent energy. To fully develop the trace of an account of political action evident in this strand of thought, we would need to fundamentally adjust our picture of the times and spaces in which action emerges.

The Political Sublime

Rancière's political thought has a longstanding concern with spatial figures of boundaries, divisions, and partitions. He mobilizes these spatial figures to support an argument about how politics as it is ordinarily understood and practiced should really be understood as "the art of suppressing the political." The spatialization of the political in Rancière's work is also related to a broader argument about how the disruptive principle of equality is contained by imperatives to reproduce order. The prominence of equality in Rancière's political thought is connected to the central importance accorded to the idea that political action is preeminently about making demands. For him, crucially, politics is seen as "a function of the fact that a wrong exists, an injustice that needs to be addressed."[63]

Rancière's effort to identify the specificity of the political proceeds by contrasting a proper understanding of politics to more standard definitions: "To think through this specificity will force us to distinguish it from what normally goes by the name of politics and for which I propose the term policing."[64] Democracy, for Rancière, refers to the instituting force of politics itself. Politics starts, in this account, when those who are previously uncounted demand to be accorded equal status. Rancière therefore defines democracy as an inherently "dissensual" practice, referring to a type of action that disrupts a settled order. It is a definition that accords explanatory and normative primacy to the "*the part of those who have no part*."[65] Proper politics involves the rupture inaugurated when those who do not count in existing distributions of order and meaning make a scene. Politics, in this view, involves configuring spaces for the appearance of subjects as "the people," or "workers," or "citizens."

In Rancière's account of democracy as a rare and fleeting event, he posits a paradoxical relationship between democracy as demos and as *kratein*, referring to a dimension of both ungovernability and government.[66] Appealing to the ancient

derivation of the word "democracy," demos, for Rancière, is the name given to those with no title to govern. So it is that politics is not about the art of governing at all. It refers properly to the interruption of "the logic by which those who have title to govern dominate—a title confirmed only by the fact that they do dominate."[67] In this understanding, those who have no proper title for governing are the privileged practitioners of democracy. Democracy *is* politics, properly speaking. It is the reconfiguration of existing distributions of parts, of public and private, universal and particular; it is not to be mistaken for governing or rule.[68]

For Rancière, then, politics is not to be construed as the exercise of power or even for a concern with common affairs. These would both require a preexisting designation of "the common." His account of democracy as an aberrant form of instituting politics turns on a stark categorical distinction between two ways of symbolizing the common, or "two types of partition of the perceptible," which he calls police and politics.[69] The idea of the partition of the perceptible, or of the sensible, refers to "the cutting up [*decoupage*] of the perceptual world that anticipates, through its sensible evidence, the distribution of shares and social parties."[70] In a strong sense, Rancière presents political communities as aesthetic communities, insofar as they depend on settled distributions of what can be known, what is visible, what can be articulated as meaningful. The notion of the partition of the sensible plays on the dual aspects of *partage* and *avoir-part*, of division and separation as well as taking part—of partaking and participation. The partition of the sensible refers to "a cutting up of the world": "This partition should be understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, that which separates and excludes; on the other, that which allows participation."[71] The notion of the partition of the sensible is, then, another example of a more general structure we have already discussed: the idea of a background order of given meanings and objects, in this case a division of the sensory field itself, that constitutes routine actions. Rancière provides a distinctive version of a widely held spatial interpretation in which the possibility of action is dependent on exclusion and separation, a condition that in turn establishes the possibility of disrupting instituted patterns of action.

Rancière presents the two ways of symbolizing the common, police and politics, as "two logics of human being-together."[72] The logic of police and the logic of equality enacted through politics are two ways of counting the parts of the community: police counts "actual groups defined by differences in birth, by different functions, locations, and interests that constitute the social body." In contrast to this empirical logic, politics counts the supplement "a part of the no-part."[73] Police refers to a settled partition of the seeable and the sayable, and politics is the disruption of any such settlement. Rancière suggests that the distinction between police or policing and politics is not meant to be a value judgment. This declaration is somewhat belied by the claims he makes about the proper meaning of key concepts and the evaluations he offers of their eclipse.[74]

It is worth acknowledging that Rancière elaborates the distinction between

police and politics as part of an attempt to define the proper vocation of political philosophy.[75] Rancière's thought shares with other accounts of the double inscription of the political a deep suspicion of both philosophy and social science. In his account, both fields seek to monopolize legitimate speech by projecting figures of the poor as silent or inarticulate.[76] In particular, social science, which for Rancière is exemplified by Pierre Bourdieu's critical sociology, is complicit with the order of police by seeking to know and represent those who cannot apparently fully know themselves. Rancière's own critical account of the "philosophy of the poor" amounts to an attempt to circumscribe for himself a position in which he will claim neither to inhabit the space of the poor in order to speak in their name nor to disavow them as illegitimate subjects.[77] By including social science within his normative account of the difference between police and egalitarian orders, on the side of police, Rancière effectively immunizes his own account from any form of social contextualization or empirical questioning. It is a style of political theory that effectively seeks to make itself irrefutable.[78]

Despite, or perhaps because of, his attempt to circumscribe a place outside of social inquiry, Rancière's distinction between the two logics of police and politics has become central to a range of discussions about the contemporary postpolitical condition, as well as to applications of concepts such as governmentality and biopolitics. The term "police" derives from the work of Michel Foucault and others, where it refers to a generalized mode of ordering bodies in different regulatory fields.[79] In Rancière's usage, police becomes a synonym for processes that constitute social orders by making clear-cut demarcations, placing bodies in fixed positions to be counted. To provide an account of police is therefore to reveal the modes through which things appear in the world as perceptible, as visible or audible. Politics, by contrast, is a term reserved for "an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing: whatever breaks with the tangible configuration whereby parties and parts or lack of them are defined by a presupposition that, by definition, has no place in that configuration—that of the part of those who have no part."[80] The police order is not necessarily without conflict and dispute, it should be said, but for Rancière the harms that drive politics as such are not derived from the internal distribution of a police order. They derive, rather, from the process of exclusion or marginalization through which any police order is constituted in the first place.

Rancière therefore provides an account of two opposed, heterogeneous orders that are also bound together and always running up against each other. According to this rather formal definition, what makes something political is that "it must give rise to a meeting of police logic and egalitarian logic that is never set up in advance."[81] The same type of action—a strike, an election, or a protest—may or may not be political in the precise sense meant by Rancière, depending on the situation in which it occurs. To count as political, such actions must take the form of processing a "wrong" in the name of equality on behalf of those who have no share in

a settled order.[82] The claims that are articulated within an established distribution of parts or shares, and any efforts to regulate the conflicts that such claims express, are just functional to the reproduction of the order of police. Nothing significant, nothing properly political, arises from them: "Political struggle is not a conflict between well defined interest groups; it is an opposition of logics that count the parties and parts of the community in different ways."[83]

From within this theoretical paradigm, the definition of properly political politics has a kind of self-confirming, analytical truth value. Given Rancière's delineation of the terms "politics" and "democracy," it follows that conflicts based on empirically observable differences or interests are by definition not properly political. Ordinary conflicts are really expressions of order, insofar as they are disputes between already demarcated interest groups over already agreed-upon issues. The understanding of police order as having no politics proper to it follows from the idea that police is a field of consensus. By aligning police with consensus, which is defined simply as identifying with conventional understandings of social division and interests, Rancière is able to define democracy as quite separate and distinct from "the consensus system." Consensus is "the reduction of politics to the police."[84] It is the annulment of "dissensus," understood as the making visible of the partitioning of the sensible.

Rancière's usage of the idea of "consensus" does not therefore refer to a process of agreement. In fact, it is not a process of any sort at all. It is the name given to durable formations of the common that expel fundamental conflicts. Rancière uses "consensus" to refer to the obviousness of the givens of experience.[85] The idea of the partition of the sensible as an order of consensus therefore reiterates a more longstanding and more broadly held habit of claiming an inherently political significance for any account of how routine practices depend on background conditions. For all its distance from more resolutely Heideggerian versions of this habit discussed in chapter 3, Rancière's version is not significantly different from them. Like them, it finds in an account of the general conditions of intelligibility of the social field the very source of domination and injustice, and in turn the possibility of emancipatory transformation.

On Rancière's understanding of the instituted order of police as an order of consensus, "dissensus" is the name of politics as the supplementary act of introducing surplus objects and subjects into the established field. Dissensus is something altogether more fundamental than conflicts of interest or opinion, since it "is the manifestation of a distance of the sensible from itself."[86] One question that arises here is why this possibility of keeping a distance from what is familiar is not allowed to be ordinary. In Rancière's work, this possibility is not only politicized but is also accorded a special status as rare and extraordinary. And this reservation is related to the idea that proper politics is mediated through processes of subjectification. So for Rancière, democracy "is the name of what comes and

interrupts the smooth working of this order through a singular mechanism of subjectification."[87]

In presenting democracy as a mode of subjectification, Rancière has in mind a specific understanding of this process. Subjectification is "the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is thus part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience." In this understanding of subjectification, becoming a subject is always also "a disidentification." And this is especially so in the case of *political* subjectification. This involves "removal from the naturalness of a place, the opening up of a subject where anyone can be counted since it is the space where those of no account are counted."[88]

Rancière's emphasis on politics as subjectification remains true to a vision in which the social order is functionally integrated through processes of subject formation that work through mechanisms of identification, counteridentification, and disidentification with naturalized orders of obviousness.[89] Rancière's distinctive inflection of the theme of subjectification is to use the vocabulary of Kantian aesthetics rather than that of semiotics or discourse theory, allowing an emphasis on sensory perception as the constitutive medium of subjectivity. But while the content and the mediums of what Althusser calls "interpellation" are certainly more differentiated and refined in Rancière's thought, the overwhelming emphasis in his distinction between police and politics remains centered on modes of subjectification as the means that secure "obviousnesses as obviousnesses."

The emphasis placed on processes of subjectification and disidentification reveals how Rancière's account of democracy stands in a long line of thinking about politics as primarily a cultural practice. It helps to account for the attraction of Rancière's thought in the English-speaking academy in a period when previously dominant models of semiotic or discursive subject formation have been challenged by an emphasis on embodiment, affect, and the senses.[90] Rancière's achievement is to represent democracy as primarily a cultural phenomenon, one that involves the disidentification of subjects, mediated by select aesthetic forms. For Rancière, the interruption that politics forces on the police order is aesthetic to its core, precisely because it is about the configuration of the sayable and seeable. Politics is the interruption of a prior distribution of what can be said by the articulation of a wrong, but it is also a performance of new distribution of what can be seen and said. In this second sense, as the maintenance of dissensus, politics is presented as an aesthetic mode that "inscribes one perceptual world within another."[91] Rancière therefore presents a distinctive account of the aesthetic constitution of politics, one that departs from strands of thought that see the aestheticization of politics as a form of depoliticization or worse.[92] His account of aesthetics is not about beauty, art, nor even sensibility. It is about the cultivation of a subjective disposition equal to the apprehension of the sublime. Politics is itself sublime: it

has no model and is not reducible to calculative rationality, and it takes the form of the performance of an experience that overwhelms settled forms of selfhood.[93]

Despite its investment in a kind of populist version of cultural refinement as its model of political action, Rancière's political theory does contain a valuable kernel in its insistence that democratic politics is motivated by a felt sense of injustice. At the center of his understanding of politics are experiences of harm, injury, and pain. Political subjects, in Rancière's account, are subjects of a wrong that has been apprehended and transformed though a process of subjectification, as described above.[94] And in this account, politics involves making a scene, making one's voice heard, in places and in arenas previously closed off or inaccessible: "Political argumentation must polemically construct the scene of its validity."[95] Rancière therefore provides us with a model of politics as animated by a distinctive sense of wrong, the content of which is variable. But "wrong" in this account is not really about questions of victimhood or suffering. It remains a formal category, a name for a mode of subjectification in which demands for equality are articulated. Rancière reduces various wrongs to one single form, so that they are all made to always conform to the spatialized logic whereby the part that has no part asserts its presence in the name of equality. In claiming that "the feeling of injustice" motivates politics, Rancière certainly does not mean to suggest that politics is a matter simply of appropriating rights that have been previously denied. Politics is not a matter of rights to inclusion at all. To count as politics, action must involve a reconfiguration of the spaces in which the identities of actors are established, that is, it must also take the form of an invention of a new disputatious subject.[96]

Rancière's version of the conceptual splitting of politics into two parts, one more fundamental than the other, differs in important ways from those versions of this maneuver already discussed in chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter. However, it does share some fundamental conceptual characteristics with those other versions. Like others, Rancière's vision focuses on the constitution of order through processes of extrusion and exclusion. And proper politics is in turn presented as the force of disruption that unsettles an instituted order by folding back into that order the disavowed conditions of its own formation. There is, then, a double spatialization at work in Rancière's thought. First, the social order is formed through a process of ordering, a process that takes the form of a kind of abjected exclusion. Order is thus both established and threatened by an excluded part. And second, Rancière accords privileged status to public scenes of claims-making as the highest form of political action by which instituted orders are disputed and disrupted.[97]

What is most significant about the affirmation of the spatiality of politics in Rancière's work is that it fixes in place a specific temporalization of politics both as rare and as an event of rupture. Here we find the perfect case of political time imagined as punctuated equilibrium, in the way described in chapter 1: given patterns of routine are temporarily suspended by a force of disruption, a force that will then dissolve as new routines are established. This is an imagination of

space and time that severely constrains any project that seeks to *do justice* to the felt sense of injustice that, with Rancière, we might want to agree animates claims for democratization. To clarify this difference between ways of interpreting the double inscription of the political, we can usefully contrast Rancière's vision with another version of post-Marxist democratic theory, that developed by Etienne Balibar.[98]

Both writers emphasize the centrality to politics of the demand for rights. Like Rancière's, Balibar's vision is worked out against the backdrop of Marxism's rather difficult historical relationship to democratic theory and practice. In contrast to Rancière, Balibar's account of the dynamics of democratic citizenship is forthright in its acknowledgment of the necessity of power relations to the realization of emancipatory goals. There is in Marxism, Balibar argues, a deep ambivalence between a messianic, eschatological view that hopes for the transcendence of existing forms of politics and a view in which politics is thought of in terms of struggles for inclusion in existing structures of power. The distinction between these two views helps us to differentiate a perspective that holds fast to Marx's dictum that "between two equal rights force decides" from a view of "conflictual democracy," a view that is premised on the idea that "only power checks power."[99] It is the latter emphasis that Balibar's own work develops.

In Rancière's "anarchic" vision of democracy, properly political events have no determinative content but consist only of the rare events when those not represented in current orders make their presence felt. In this view, the value of rights inheres only in the act of laying claim to rights not currently held. Rights, in this view, can never really be exercised or possessed.[100] Rancière's view therefore does not allow that democratic rights, once established, need to be implemented, exercised, and possibly defended too. This account always presents institutionalization as a diminution of properly political or democratic energies, which are only reserved for more or less rare moments of dissensual claim making. Balibar, by contrast, argues that citizenship is a process by which demands both for new rights and for the expansion of existing rights extend the bounds of what he refers to as "equaliberty." He argues that the complex relations between equality and freedom are played out in a "dialectic of insurrection and constitution." This sounds rather a lot like Rancière's vision, but Balibar's placement of the two terms of this dialectic is significantly different: "There will be a permanent tension between the conditions that historically determine the construction of institutions that conform to the proposition of equaliberty and the excessive, hyperbolic universality of the statement." Here Balibar locates the possibilities of democratization within existing practices of democratic citizenship and in the forms of agency that are generated by these frames. In his view, the defining problem of politics is the relation of the citizen to the powers of law and institutions. This relationship is always shaped by practices of resistance, insurrection, and insubordination, or what Balibar refers to "as so many modalities of the critical, negative relation of

the citizen to the law and to power."[101] In Balibar's vision, democratic citizenship is inherently conflictual in a more or less ongoing way, and not only in moments of dramatic interruption.

As already suggested, the contrast between Balibar's vision and Rancière's lies in a difference between two images of political time. In one view, stable and established orders are occasionally interrupted, are reordered, and then settle down again. In the other, conflict is presumed to be a routine feature of "constituted orders," and to have various generative dynamics, rather than to arise only at rare moments of constitution or crisis. The contrast is, then, also one between different styles of theorizing. To try to establish a proper order of derivation between different forms of conflict is, as Balibar puts it, to fall into the trap of transforming political problems "into a representation of *the political*."[102] In contrast to other thinkers who valorize political rupture without any concern with specifying the agency of such transformation, and rather than supposing that radical democracy must eschew questions of the exercise of power so that the role of the people is reserved for the strictly eccentric contestation of forces of rule, Balibar challenges us to imagine the institutionalization of democratic citizenship *as* contestation. If we accept the challenge, it would lead us to look for traces of "the political" in the most ordinary scenes in which democracy is enacted.[103] To help us shift perspective in this direction, we might also want to broaden our horizons beyond the milieu of the global North that has come to provide the exemplary cases of postpolitical despondency.

Governmentality and the Politics of Support

This chapter began by tracking how the concept of hegemony has served as one site for the development of post-Marxist theories of democracy. By elaborating on the different ways in which the concept of hegemony is mobilized in the work of Stuart Hall and in the theory of radical democracy developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, I have sought to accentuate the contrast between action-oriented interpretations and more ontologically inclined interpretations of political life. The strongly ontological interpretation of democracy as hegemony provided by Laclau and Mouffe sits comfortably within a culturalist tradition in which political orders are secured by mechanisms of subject formation. The vision of politics as *changing the subject* finds its clearest statement in Rancière's political thought. It has little concern with the strategic challenges of mobilization and organization that shape accounts of radical democracy as hegemony, nor with how democracy might require the exercise of power and not just its contestation and disruption.

Rancière's work is, in these respects, one example of how the concept of hegemony has fared rather poorly since debates of the 1970s and 1980s. Images of political spontaneity inflected, for example, by ideas developed by Antonio Ne-

gri and other inheritors of Italian autonomist thought have certainly helped to displace such concerns, as has a resurgent interest in anarchist thought. And in academic fields of cultural analysis, where Gramsci's work was once so central, concepts such as biopower, discipline, and governmentality associated with the work of Foucault have been proposed as a more appropriate theoretical lens for understanding dynamics of power and resistance. I suggested in chapter 1 that Foucault might well provide an account of power that is better suited to understanding democracy as a specific mode of exercising power, not just resisting it. I want to develop this thought in the rest of this chapter. To do so, it is necessary first to recognize that using concepts drawn from Foucault's work requires one to negotiate the same tensions found in interpretations of the concept of hegemony. Interpretations that emphasize Foucault's notion of power as dependent on the strategic interactions of free subjects, which is where the democratic potential of Foucault's thought really lies, tend to be overshadowed by interpretations that deploy Foucault's ideas to support accounts of totalizing modes of subjection.[104]

The standard interpretation of ideas like governmentality and biopower is quite consistent with a long-standing tendency to think of technical or administrative procedures as vehicles of depoliticization. Demonstrating that such procedures are in fact infused with power relations is the first trick that one learns in becoming proficient in critical analysis. Pointing out that they are doubly political because they also effectively cover over their own political status is a second, more advanced trick. Taken together, these two critical maneuvers are central to the stark spatialization of order and rupture that ontological interpretations of the political fix in place. But far from presenting the emergence of government as a depoliticizing mode of power, in the early 1980s Foucault himself lamented the intellectual fashion for preferring the political to mere politics, on which such an analysis often relies: "Nothing seems more dangerous to me than that much vaunted shift from politics (*la politique*) to the political (*le politique*)."[105] Foucault refers here to the style of analysis developed by Lefort and continued by thinkers such as Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy, which I discussed in chapter 3.[106] His caustic reference to those debates in French political thought suggests that a revision of the strongly ontological interpretation of the double inscription of the political might be called for. In his own reconstruction of Greek political discourses, Foucault distinguishes between two fields of political problems: problems of the constitution and problems of the exercise of power (*politeia* and *dunasteia*). For him, it is among the second set of concerns, revolving around the ways in which society is actually governed, that one finds "political problems in the strictest sense."[107] Foucault's contention that the problems of the "political game" deserve more attention in their own right suggests that they should not be seen as merely derivative of either a more fundamental ontological realm or a field of consensual management.

Foucault's comments on politics, the political, and problems throw into new

relief how the idea of "police" might be best interpreted. In the original genealogical derivation of this idea, it refers to "all the methods for developing the quality of the population and the strength of the nation."[108] In this definition, police is not presented as a realm of consensus at all but as generative of new forms of contention and power, ones that in turn require further analysis. As we saw in chapter 1, Foucault's account of governmental power actually suggests a markedly different way of thinking about the relationship between government and the emergence of political contention. His suggestion that democracy might be intimately related to, rather than opposed to, the dynamics of governing populations at various scales cuts across narratives of depoliticization and the postpolitical condition informed by ontological interpretations of the double inscription of the political.[109] Like Hall with his account of hegemony, and despite the theoretical differences that separate these two thinkers, Foucault invites us to take democracy seriously as a mode of power dependent on the strategic interaction of different actors.

In order to further elaborate on the implications of Foucault's remarks about the internal relationship between democratic politics and the arts of government, I want to consider Partha Chatterjee's account of democratic politics and routine forms of bureaucracy, corruption, and graft in contemporary India. Chatterjee provides an account of political life that revolves around a fundamentally different imagination of the relations between democracy, government, and political action than the one that has solidified in ontologies of the political. Rather than being shaped by a concern with depoliticization or the rise of the postpolitical, his account is animated by the question of how to theorize politics in deeply unequal societies "in a period of unprecedented engagement with modern electoral politics," not least by previously marginalized groups.[110]

Chatterjee's account of postcolonial democracy is a development of the critique of colonial power in India by the Subaltern Studies Group of historians.[111] Using ideas drawn from both Gramsci and Foucault, this scholarly project of postcolonial theorizing has challenged the marginalization of subaltern struggles under colonialism by nationalist narratives of elite leadership and heroism. The central figure in these accounts of Indian colonial politics is the peasantry, a residual category in classical Marxism. Taken as the privileged figure of subaltern agency, the peasantry serves therefore not simply as the image of resistance by the marginalized or the subordinated but as the figure for exploring the particularistic limits of both nationalist and Marxist narratives of universalization.[112]

In Ranajit Guha's classic account of subaltern agency, informed by Gramsci's work, a diverse set of peasant, worker, and petit bourgeois movements were active under British rule, none of which achieved hegemonized leadership. As a consequence, national liberation was only partial because it was elite dominated and did not overcome communalist divisions. This reflects the degree to which the colonial state depended on domination through coercion, so that "vast areas in the life and consciousness of the people" were never effectively incorporated into

colonial hegemony. In arguing that colonial rule represents a situation of "dominance without hegemony," Guha argues that interactions based on persuasive relationships were outweighed by more obviously coercive modes of power.[113] In Chatterjee's own contribution to this critical revision of colonial historiography, the account of the "structural dichotomy" between the domain of subaltern politics and elite politics characteristic of colonialism is refined by combining Gramsci and Foucault to develop a concept of "modes of power," defined primarily by reference to distinctive forms of property relations. Chatterjee argued that more than one mode of power is always operative in any given social formation. In the Indian case, this means that the model of hegemonic leadership posited by Gramsci is severely limited.[114]

Chatterjee's account of "the politics of the governed" seeks to link this historical analysis to the contemporary dynamics of Indian society. The politics of the governed is a heuristic frame for thinking about democratization in post-Independence India. In a shift of theoretical register, it locates democratization squarely within the field of postcolonial governmentality. In so doing, Chatterjee conceptualizes governmentality not as a field of top-down subjectification but as a field of claims and counterclaims. Chatterjee finds "the condition of possibility for democracy" in the grubby, compromised, often illegal, and sometimes violent activities of demand and response that define the politics of the governed.[115]

In part, Chatterjee's account of the politics of the governed is a challenge to the disdain for ordinary politics among intellectuals and elites in India, where an ideal of civil society is often held as the proper norm. For Chatterjee, the invocation of the norm of civil society is complicit with a denial of the structural inequalities that condemn so many to the instrumental politics of political society. Rather than presuming that democratic mobilization necessarily takes the form of rights-based claims on the state articulated by citizens in civil society, Chatterjee argues that the expression of popular demands in what he calls political society is the real source of democratic energy.

The distinction between civil society and political society takes on a very different resonance in Chatterjee's account of the politics of the governed, compared to Gramsci's use of the same distinction. Chatterjee uses the distinction to define a sphere of civility and rights (civil society) and a world of pragmatic bargaining over resources (political society). His account refers to a split between a small and restricted civil society (which he takes to conform to citizenly norms of civility, consent, and contract) and a field in which people are treated not as citizens but as a population, that is, as targets of policies enacted by the state and by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The division is the mark of a hiatus between modernity and democracy that Chatterjee takes to be a feature of the non-Western world. Crucially, he understands political society as "a site of negotiation and contestation opened up by the activities of governmental agencies aimed at population groups."[116] Chatterjee outlines a dynamic of strategic maneuvering,

centered on issues such as access to land, housing, or basic services, in which the expectations of population groups and the reciprocal obligation of state agencies to "look after populations" are negotiated.[117]

Most people in India, Chatterjee claims, live outside the fields of formal civil society, but he contends that they are nevertheless objects of all sorts of policy interventions. Chatterjee suggests that the enactment of these interventions should be thought of as thoroughly political. They are structured through claims and demands and are the very scenes where new forms of political action emerge around issues of security, welfare, and livelihood.[118] This insistence on the political quality of administration, bureaucracy, and policy is part of Chatterjee's argument that there is no need to think of some of the characteristic qualities of politics in the non-Western world, such as the resilience of populism or of political violence, for example, as deviations from proper democracy at all. They are ordinary features of the formation of democracy in particular contexts.[119]

According to Chatterjee, the resilience of political society in India is an index of deep-seated inequality and also the way in which inequality is reproduced. In this view, the extension of the state's reach is an effect of a specifically *democratic* imperative to compensate for the costs of capitalist development. Chatterjee suggests that processes of "accumulation by dispossession" and exploitation, when set in the context of existing or emerging democratic settlements, can generate an expansion of certain sorts of public, redistributive functions of the state, not their diminution. The implication of this argument is that this governmental process needs to be understood as an extension of the political field, not as an index of postpoliticization.[120] Chatterjee's crucial conceptual innovation is to think of governmentality not simply as a mode of strategic intervention by state actors but as a medium for political claims-making and for the processing of conflicts. What is therefore most innovative about the idea of the politics of the governed is that it seeks to unwrap "some of the conditions in which the functions of governmentality can create conditions not for a contraction but rather an expansion of democratic participation."[121]

Chatterjee's strong claim, consistent with the earlier Subaltern Studies analysis to which he contributed, is that the entanglement between state and population is a relatively recent process in India. Popular politics has been reconfigured, he argues, by the extension of the reach of the state through various governmental programs. The extension of government through development polices claims legitimacy on the basis of providing for the well-being of target populations. And strategies for governing populations depend not primarily on domination or subjection but on the attempt to configure a set of interactive relationships.[122] As government agencies and NGOs have developed extensive networks, reaching into rural areas in particular, this generates demands by peasants on government officials and elected representatives. In this account, "the steady widening and deepening of the web of governmentality" into rural India has been associated with

the "deepening of democratic demands." According to Chatterjee, this set of relationships is where "the everyday operations of democratic politics, organization, and leadership come into play."[123] Seen from one angle as so many instruments for the extension of control, from another angle programs of community building, participation, and empowerment appear as so many practices of bargaining, deal making, and negotiation.[124]

The picture Chatterjee provides is one in which attempts to deliver services in more or less administratively efficient ways generate agitation and further attempts to regulate claims and expectations. The argument can be seen as a variation on Ian Hacking's notion of "making up people."[125] Strategies that seek to govern the conduct of others generate unexpected consequences from those targeted: "Populations respond to the regime of governmentality by seeking to constitute themselves as groups that deserve the attention of government."[126] One implication of Chatterjee's argument that is important for my general argument is that these interactive relationships are necessarily situated not only in time and space but also around disputes over specific issues, not least around the provision of certain sorts of stuff—water, basic consumer goods and services, access to health care. Chatterjee's analysis of the dynamics of political power in contemporary India therefore locates the possibilities of democratic politics in the proliferation and extension of agencies distributing education, health, food, electricity, and other materials and services. His favored examples for the politics of the governed include mobilization by residents of illegal urban settlements, landless rural people, day laborers, and refugees, all of whom he understands as actors "who make a claim to a habitation and a livelihood as a matter of right and use their association as the principal collective instrument to pursue the claim."[127]

The situated focal points of the politics of the governed inform Chatterjee's suggestion that political society is the realm in which exceptions are constantly made. But rather than thinking of this feature as a sign of the arbitrary imposition of sovereign command, Chatterjee presents it as the condition of political action understood as a field of situated bargaining over claims and counterclaims. While not necessarily conforming to idealized models of law and citizenship, the claims generated by the extension of the reach of the state are emphatically political in nature: "They could only be made on a political terrain, where rules may be bent or stretched, and not on the terrain of established law or administrative procedure. The success of these claims depends entirely on the ability of particular population groups to mobilize support to influence the implementation of governmental policy in their favour. But this success is necessarily temporary and contextual. The strategic balance of political forces could change and rules may no longer be bent as before."[128] What Chatterjee describes here is a process akin to "the dialectic of control" between states and citizens outlined by theorists of state formation and citizenship in the West.[129] The distinctive inflection he provides to the image of a dialectical interaction between parties bound together over shared—that is,

divisive—concerns lies in his sense that this dialectic does not follow a single trajectory of territorial consolidation and the progressive extension of formal civil, political, and social rights of citizenship. It is instead a much more localized and variable dynamic.

Chatterjee's analysis of political society marks a significant shift away from the classical paradigm of subaltern resistance in postcolonial theory, which tends to emphasize more or less dramatic acts of insurgency or rebellion.[130] The account of the politics of the governed challenges heroic images of the political subject, whether presented as a subject of revolutionary events, of the politics of the street, or of the politics of resistance. Chatterjee suggests that "what we need is a different conceptualization of the subject of political practice—neither as abstract and unencumbered individual selves nor as malleable objects of governmental policy, but rather as concrete selves necessarily acting within multiple networks of collective obligations and solidarities to work out strategies of coping with, resisting, or using to their advantage the vast array of technologies of power deployed by the modern state."[131] Or, to put it another way, Chatterjee encourages us to stop thinking of the subjects of the politics of the governed as recalcitrant targets of totalizing symbolic mechanisms of subjectification. We might think of them instead as subjects of rational action, articulating their demands, expressing their identities, and acting out their passions in fields of situated action in which specific *things* are always at stake.[132]

Chatterjee's conceptualization of democratic politics puts the emphasis on the ways in which formal relationships between "states" and "citizens" are configured by a whole set of intermediary actors: police officers and social workers, activists and agitators, politicians and experts.[133] It is in the relationships revolving around these and other intermediaries that the politics of governed is formed, relationships in which rules are interpreted and bent, laws suspended and circumvented. Chatterjee's account does not see the subjects of political action as enframed within discursive orders or perceptual fields. He instead presents them as actors making strategic moves in a complex set of games of compulsion and constraint, obligation and oppression. Chatterjee's work is, then, an example of a style of critical thought that takes democracy seriously by seeking to understand the interactive dynamics between differentially empowered actors working in relation to different sources of legitimacy and capacity. The emergence of new forms of the political, from this perspective, is not a matter of dramatic events of political subjectification but is instead rooted in routine struggles, everyday interactions, and bureaucratic frustrations.

While Chatterjee outlines how the extension of governmental strategies generates a political dynamic, we might still want to pause and ask why this variable dynamic of the politics of "partaking"—participating and engaging with state actors in order to make use of resources—should be thought of as democratic.[134] The legitimacy of governmental agencies and NGOs might well depend on their ability

to provide resources and services for populations, but this does not necessarily require legitimacy of a democratic type. It might well require a circumvention of rules and procedures as much as their strict enforcement. Chatterjee's account of the politics of the governed is certainly a useful reminder that there are ways in which support is gained and legitimacy is secured that cannot be modeled on processes of interpellation. But more than this, a crucial aspect of Chatterjee's argument is that the practices of governing populations are embedded in the routines of electoral competition. Chatterjee's argument rests on the idea that the populations subject to development policies are able to make instrumental use of their status as voters in elections in order to mobilize strategic power in fields of postcolonial governmentality. The fields of formal citizenship and governmentality therefore overlap and intermingle in important ways. Electoral politics and the developmental politics of governmentality have become intimately intertwined, Chatterjee argues, invoking the case of rural West Bengal as an example "where the Left parties have converted the functions of governmentality into potent and amazingly stable sources of local support from a clear majority of population groups."[135] In Chatterjee's account of the politics of the governed, practices of governmentality are effectively refigured as means for the ongoing maintenance of the politics of electoral support.

Chatterjee's interpretation of contemporary democratic politics in India is not an uncontroversial one. The idea that political society is separate and distinct from civil society and characterized only by strategic action and instrumental rationalities seems to imply that citizenship rights and the rule of law have no significance for the struggles of the poor and disempowered. In response to this worry, civil society and political society might be better thought of as two styles of action that can be combined in different ways in particular contexts.[136] This approach is better suited to the analysis of how the vocabularies of citizenship and democracy become "vernacularized" in processes of popular politics.[137]

Chatterjee's account of the politics of the governed differs markedly from a tradition of radical political thought that presents what Hannah Arendt tends to call "the social" or what Jacques Rancière calls "police" as necessarily containing, contaminating, or domesticating authentic political action. In contrast to these sorts of interpretations, Chatterjee's account of the politics of the governed confirms Foucault's suggestion that dispersed practices of government should be understood as the source of distinctive forms of agonism that deserve analysis and specification of their own. The analysis of the politics of the governed challenges the received interpretation of practices of government as mechanisms for rendering technical what are in fact contentious issues, or as a means for imposing consensus. Far from serving as a medium of depoliticization, and further still from being a rare thing that appears only in events of rupture and dissensus, for Chatterjee politics is an integral part of the routines of the developmental state and practices of governmentality. He shows us that practices of governing populations

generate conflicts and demands that are resolutely political, are processed through combinations of force and persuasion, and combine aspects of communicative action and strategic action. He also sees them as potential fields for the expansion of capacities for collective action that are not contained by the normative image of citizens in civil society.[138]

Changing the Subject

This chapter started by tracing how the concept of hegemony has been used in different strands of radical political thought as the means to open up the analysis of democratic politics. The idea can be used to address a set of questions about how consent is sought and won as well as to bolster an ontological determination of the political field as a field of subjectification. The theoretical shift from hegemony to the analytics of governmentality can easily support a further reduction of the problem of consent to a process of subjectification under the sway of "police" imperatives. Alternatively, the shift can be used to challenge the idea that practices of government are vectors for depoliticization. Chatterjee returns us to the question of how the politics of support is pursued.

The difference I have traced in this chapter is between a theoretical imagination focused on isolating the determinant force of disruption on which the very possibility of the political is presumed to depend versus a theoretical imagination concerned with analyzing politics in terms of the animating expectations and injustices that shape political conflicts between situated actors. The emphasis in ontological interpretations of the political on the aporias of subjection is one example of a more broadly shared theoretical structure of feeling, one in which changing the subject is presented as the core dynamic of political life and, therefore, of radical political strategy too. This presumption raises fundamental questions about the limits of the democratic imagination of certain traditions of social theory. The assumption that the demonstration of historical contingency means that identities, institutions, and practices both can and should be changed is central to the political unconscious of a great deal of avowedly critical thought in the humanities and the social sciences. The payoff of theoretical arguments that there are no stable, a priori individual or collective identities, only contingent identifications generated through the articulation of subject positions and partial closures of fields of perception, is a view of political life that posits that people's subjectivities are readily available for remaking under the force of the revelatory exposure of their own fabrication.[139] Styles of political thought that seek the deep ontological core of the political share in the same culturalist understanding of the dynamics of self-formation. Whether understood in terms of the distribution of the sensible, through a theory of empty signifiers, or through notions of the magma of imaginary significations, these are styles of theory shaped by a residual functionalism

in which it is assumed that social formations are, indeed, held together at a deep level through broadly ideological means, that is, by *getting at* the subject. It might be more appropriate, more democratic one might even say, to inquire into why people's subjectivities and identifications come to matter so strongly to them, and in turn to ask what price would have to be paid by any of us in the pursuit of their transformation.[140]

And so we are returned to the interpretation of consent and consensus that we encountered first in chapter 1. From one of the perspectives traced in this chapter, consent and consensus can be thought of as much the same thing, as means of hoodwinking people by fixing in place before them what is obviously seeable and sayable. In this view the problems of the politics of support are reduced to the functional needs of elites. From another perspective, consent and consensus can be thought of as different processes, allowing us to see that the politics of support—seeking after and perhaps securing consent—is much more than a matter of securing identification. It has as much to do with bargaining and compromise over tangible resources and rights to participation. Nothing necessarily leads to the latter set of processes having a democratic shape or a fair and equitable outcome, of course. All consent is "grudging," we might well suppose.[141] This is not the same as saying that it is always illusory, though, because consent is not best thought of either in terms of a philosophy of consciousness or via the residues of a theory of ideology. The inequities and advantages that grudging consent hides from view are perhaps better conceptualized in terms of "adaptive preferences," or "systematically distorted communication." These are theoretical ideas that allow us to keep in view people's own implication in their actions. Shifting to this view of how politics works also holds out the possibility of taking democracy seriously as a mode of power of a particular sort, as something more than an ideal visible only in fleeting moments between its otherwise inevitable suspension. To lay the ground for the conceptual reorientation required if we are to develop this possibility further, we need to consider more directly how questions of conflict should be best conceptualized. We turn to this topic in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

The Significance of Conflict

> Conflict in our moral sentiments and beliefs is, first, a historically, socially, and probably psychologically conditioned phenomenon, the product of such things as pluralistic societies and rapid cultural change as well as, perhaps, more generally distributed psychological needs which tend to conflict. We can, to some extent, understand why we have conflicting sentiments, but that does not mean, or should not mean, that we therefore withdraw our loyalty from them. Second, it is not true that any situation in which there is no such conflict is better than one in which there is, or even—what is perhaps more plausible—that conflict reduction is an aim which always has a strong priority.
>
> **—Bernard Williams**

The ascendency of ontological interpretations of political life discussed in the previous two chapters is part of a more broadly shared agreement that liberal political thought has a tendency to displace the disruptions of politics in favor of procedures for efficient administration or for reaching binding agreements.[1] In this chapter I develop the argument that the contrast found in political theory, which is in turn echoed in critical ontologies of space and spatiality, between deliberative approaches to democracy apparently oriented to consensus and agonist approaches that are open to the rigors of intractable struggle is better thought of as a contrast between different ways of conceptualizing the sources and the appropriate responses to conflict. What is seen as value pluralism from one perspective can be seen as an ineradicable element of antagonism that inheres in human affairs from another. While the first perspective might well hold out the hope of arriving at some rational procedure for squaring different values, the alternative perspective holds that not just value pluralism but deeply rooted energies of discord, friction, and hostility make rational deliberation impossible and even dangerous. But the claim that appreciation of agonism and contestation in political processes is the special preserve of ontological styles of theory is belied by the centrality of this topic to critical theories of deliberative democracy.[2] It is perfectly possible to

acknowledge the centrality of conflict, antagonism, and contestation in political affairs without buying into the genre conventions of the ontological interpretation of the political.

It is important to acknowledge from the outset that there are different versions of agonistic political theory. Chantal Mouffe has suggested that agonistic theorists like William Connolly, Bonnie Honig, and James Tully remain a little too enamoured of the comforts of deliberative ideals, failing to address antagonism in the deep ontological way in which her own work seeks to do.[3] The style of agonistic thought that Mouffe criticizes does not depend on a stark contrast between consensus and antagonism. It relies instead on the sort of existential ethos Connolly once described: "Politics resides in this ambiguous space between the insistent rewards of commonality and the wonder of existence."[4] We saw in chapter 3 that the concept of the political is actually subject to different sorts of interpretations, sometimes inflected by a more "idealist" ethos, sometimes by a more "realist" one, in Hannah Pitkin's terms, or in associative or dissociative terms, in Oliver Marchart's description. Andrew Schaap makes a similar distinction, differentiating a "republican" from a "realist" style of agonistic political theory. Schaap suggests that the first strand, exemplified perhaps by Hannah Arendt, is concerned with politics in its *horizontal* dimension, that is, with questions of freedom, solidarity, and action in concert. We might also locate Lefort and Wolin in this line of thought, as well as Rosanvallon. The second strand, which would include Mouffe as well as the much darker thought of Giorgio Agamben, is concerned with the *vertical* dimension of politics, that is, with issues of sovereignty and decision, and is more clearly inflected by the legacy of Carl Schmitt. The difference between these two strands of self-consciously agonistic thought can also be characterized in terms of a primary emphasis on the conditions of possibility of solidarity and concerted action in pluralist societies versus an emphasis on understanding the dynamics of antagonism. Schaap suggests that "in both traditions, the anticipation of the political as an ever-present possibility conditions ordinary politics: the potential intensification of politics towards violent confrontation on the one hand or the potential disclosure of a common world to those engaged in political action on the other."[5] And we saw in the last chapter that Jacques Rancière's work manages to straddle the difference between these two forms of anticipation, retaining a somewhat Arendtian concern with the constitution of common life while having a much darker sense of ordinary politics as a field of overbearing domination.

I would maintain that what is actually most valuable about the more realist strand of thought on the political is its emphasis on demands as a central aspect of political life, which are understood as both claims made by subjects as well as the impositions placed on them.[6] But there is, I suggest, no good reason to hold to the rather dramatic picture of how this dynamic emerges in the world. Rather than thinking of the political, in either an idealist or realist sense, as a potential that might disrupt or be disclosed in ordinary politics, we might just think of the

very ordinariness of "ordinary politics" as the ongoing enactment of the political in both senses. This proposal remains difficult to accept if one continues to hold to the restrictive definition of the political developed by poststructuralist theories of radical democracy and post-Marxist ontologies of the political. From this perspective, the essence of democratic politics is to express the political in its proper sense, and therefore it lies in the constant contestation of the boundaries of political life itself. For example, Ernesto Laclau presents populism as a political form that questions the institutional order "by constructing an underdog as an historical agent—i.e. an agent which is an other in relation to the ways things stand." In this account, the conditions of possibility of the political and of populism are much the same.[7] In a familiar move, Laclau presents social division as both constitutive of any demos but also constitutively disavowed by it. Developing Lefort's notion of the empty place of democratic sovereignty, Laclau interprets populism as the formal expression that reveals the divided origin of the political but whose full realization would also be the end of politics, the coincidence of the political community with itself in totalizing unity. Laclau's recourse to the paradoxical formula of projection and disavowal, of constitution and exclusion, is just one example of a broadly shared theoretical maneuver. It takes for granted that properly political action challenges the framing of politics itself and that this is a discrete activity set off against more mundane forms of political action that leave those frames in place. The stark conceptual spatialization of the political, and the rarefication of the type of action through which it is contested and reinstituted, follows from a theoretical commitment to avoid the reduction of political action to a mere representation or refraction of other realms, such as the economy or the social.

In this chapter I link the ontological splitting of the political and the associated spatialization of the political around an image of closure and ruptural events, already discussed in chapters 3 and 4, to a consideration of how agonism is figured in theories of radical democracy as a formal possibility arising from ontological features of the world itself. I take Chantal Mouffe's elaboration of an agonistic theory of radical democracy as my exemplar. I then develop an alternative account of the relations between politics and the political, one that picks up on themes already discussed concerning the ordinary forms of political life through which the boundaries of the political are routinely contested and re-formed.

In laying the grounds for an account of how to theorize democracy ordinarily, as a mode of processing conflicts, I want to keep in mind an observation made by Doreen Massey about the tendency for the postfoundational critique of liberal notions of democratic consensus to run together two distinct arguments.[8] First, there is an argument that the search for agreement is impossible because it seeks to close down the play of differentiation inherent in human relations. This argument is most clearly developed by Mouffe. I argue that poststructuralist radical democracy actually misconstrues the pragmatics of political life. Second, there is

the argument that liberal political theory conceives of consensus and agreement in overly rationalist ways. This is a much more telling criticism, and one that is widely discussed by proponents of revised versions of deliberative democratic theory, among others. But ontologies of the political are actually poorly suited to develop this argument, because of their overwhelming focus on symbolic representations as the medium of subject formation and their recurring difficulty with notions of experience. This means that ontological interpretations of the political can comprehend observable patterns of human accommodation only by reference to, and as derivative of, ontologized relations of antagonism, hostility, and exclusivity. In the second half of the chapter I begin to outline an approach to understanding the situated contexts of action from which feelings of injustice arise, as a first step toward reconstructing democratic inquiry more fully along these lines in part 3.

Ontologies of Antagonism

Mouffe has developed her version of radical democracy in unrelenting opposition to what she presents as the orthodoxies of liberal political theory. She argues that liberal thought is characterized by its incapacity to fully grasp the nature of the political, by which she means the ineradicability of antagonism in political life. Any tradition of political thought found to be guilty of this charge qualifies as "liberal" in Mouffe's work. Liberalism is defined by a commitment to "pluralism without antagonism," she argues, and is overwhelmingly marked by rationalism, individualism, and universalism.

The pivotal claim of Mouffe's agonistic vision of radical democracy is that facing up to the possibilities and perils of political life requires acknowledging "the dimension of the 'we,' the construction of the friend's side, as well as the dimension of the 'them,' the constitutive aspect of antagonism."[9] She argues that the evasion of the political involves a denial of the dimension of antagonism in this very specific sense: it is an evasion of the consequences of a distinctive ontology of identity formation, according to which collective identities depend on the positing of hierarchical patterns of difference between Self and Other. On the basis of this ontology, Mouffe argues that the necessary determination of the limits of the political can never be resolved into a rational procedure of justification. It must take the form of arbitrary closure. But for this very reason, any settled political community is also always open to destabilization. In developing an argument for the necessity of delimiting the political and the ultimately unjustifiable basis for doing so, Mouffe has appealed to the authority of various thinkers, including Jacques Derrida and his account of undecidability, the reactionary political theory of Carl Schmitt, and the philosophical anthropology of René Girard. I want here to explore how Mouffe's use of these and other authorities to sustain an ontological

account of the deep-seated force of antagonism informs a specific spatialization of the dynamics of political life.

As we saw in chapter 4, Mouffe's account of radical democracy is shaped by a concern to find alternative conceptual resources for understanding the dynamics of antagonism, since these can no longer be modeled on an image of the dialectics of class struggle. In the course of this search, since the 1980s Mouffe's work has been central to the rehabilitation of the Nazi legal scholar Carl Schmitt as an unlikely reference point for Left theories of radical democracy.[10] Schmitt has been described as "the godfather of the concept of the political."[11] His critique of liberalism encompasses the politics of crisis situations, the spatial ordering of inter-state relations, and the politics of law and of war, and it is informed by a wider critique of technology.[12] Foremost among the ideas for which Schmitt has become an authoritative reference is the proposition that the ultimately groundless nature of political action necessarily means that politics is all about sovereign assertions of pure will. In this respect, Schmitt's is a starkly gendered account of the weakening effects of liberal parliamentary politics. In such regimes, epitomized for Schmitt by the Weimar Republic, public life is not manly enough, because it is about compromise and coalition making and, in turn, it undermines the ability to make clear-cut definitions between friends and enemies. Political action, for Schmitt, is exemplified by the act of decision. In Schmitt's thought, in which real democracy requires the internal homogeneity of an ethnically defined people, the notion of decision is attached to the image of masterful subjects, able to impose their will. Schmitt's decisionism reduces all politics to the assertive exercise of sovereignty, an understanding encapsulated in the formula "sovereign is he who decides on the emergency situation."[13] The statement has become something of an orthodoxy in strands of radical theorizing about the politics of emergency and security in the first part of the twenty-first century.[14]

Schmitt's account of decisive action is intimately connected to the claim that the concept of the political refers not to issues of legitimacy but to an existential binary contrast between friends and enemies. Schmitt's influential definition of the political depends on a precise mode of concept formation. Herbert Marcuse once observed that Schmitt's thought actually provides only a series of *counter-concepts*—ideas developed to contrast and refute liberal idealism, historical materialism, or rationalist social science. As a result, it is a decidedly formal style of theorizing.[15] Nowhere is this more clearly evident than in Schmitt's definition of the political. He argues that the concept of the political must "rest on its own ultimate distinctions," on the rather spurious grounds that morality is defined in terms of good and evil, economics by the profitable and the unprofitable, and aesthetics by an opposition between the beautiful and the ugly. The equivalent distinction for political relations is that between friend and enemy: "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy."[16] It is important to emphasize that the primary term in Schmitt's

friend/enemy formula is that of enmity. Friendship is a strictly derivative term in Schmitt's conceptual schema, always and inevitably scarred by the existential primacy of hostility and antagonism.[17] As he himself put it, "Because the sphere of the political is in the final analysis determined by the real possibility of enmity, political conceptions and ideas cannot very well start with an anthropological optimism." It follows, for Schmitt, that antagonism is the defining characteristic of political relations: "The Political is the most intense and extreme antagonism, and every concrete antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the most extreme point, that of the friend-enemy grouping."[18] In this understanding, any diminution of antagonism is actually an affront to the proper value and force of political existence.

What Mouffe finds in Schmitt is one version of a generic account of the relational formation of identity. For her, Schmitt's ideas "converge with several important trends in contemporary theory which affirm the relational character of every identity, the unavoidable couple identity/difference, and the impossibility of a positivity that would be given without any trace of negativity."[19] Another reference point for Mouffe's argument about the inherently antagonistic roots of human sociability is René Girard's theory of mimetic desire. Girard's core claim is that desire is not structured around a relation between a desiring subject and a desiring object. It involves instead a triangular relationship in which the value of the desirable object arises from the mediating glance of an Other, whose desire serves as a model to be imitated by the subject. Desire generates rivalry because the mediating figure who at first serves as a model for the self subsequently becomes a rival and then an obstacle to the realization of desire, in an escalating dynamic of violent conflict, vendettas, and scapegoating. Envy and jealously are therefore at the very core of subjectivity for Girard. For this reason, from the perspective of the resolutely masculinist ontology of desire that Girard proposes, any struggle for emancipation or justice is doomed to failure, driven as it is by a desire that at its core is merely an expression of violent competition.[20]

For Girard, "the true secret of conflict and violence is mimetic desire." Human relations are all about mutual imitation and therefore reciprocity: "What characterizes human conflict is not the loss of reciprocity but the transition, imperceptible at first but then ever more rapid, from good to bad reciprocity."[21] The move from good to bad reciprocity is always a possibility, but the move in the opposite direction is apparently more difficult to sustain. In this understanding, institutionalized systems of authority are a way of controlling this escalating dynamic of mimetic desire and rivalry. The strong implication of Girard's work is that order is founded on a necessary act of violence, which puts an end to the otherwise destabilizing dynamic of escalating rivalry. Sacrifice is a means by which a surrogate victim functions to put an end to the intensifying dynamic of hostility, but this works only to inaugurate a new structure based on sacrificial rites that keep violence contained and allow social life to flourish. Societies ward off the constant

possibility of collapse inherent in their own propensity toward violence through rites and rituals but also through processes of scapegoating. In short, community life protects itself against the risks of its own propensity toward violence by projecting that violence against innocents. For Girard, it follows that "the generative violence constitutes at least the indirect origin of all those things that men hold most dear and that they strive most ardently to preserve."[22]

Girard's account of the dynamic of hostility that can be contained only through an act of ritualistic sacrificial violence has a structural similarity to Mouffe's claim regarding the necessity of decision in establishing hegemonic relations of equivalence. The significance of Girard's Christian apologetics for Mouffe's broader project lies in her claim that he draws into view the mimetic effects of both empathy and hostility, only one side of which is emphasized by the Enlightenment tradition.[23] Girard therefore serves as another authority for Mouffe's representation of the inherently antagonistic dimensions of sociability: "The importance of Girard is that he reveals the conflictual nature of mimesis, the double bind by which the same movement that brings human beings together in their common desire for the same objects is also at the origin of their antagonism. Rivalry and violence, far from being the exterior of exchange, are therefore its ever-present possibility. Reciprocity and hostility cannot be dissociated and we have to realize that the social order will always be threatened by violence." According to Mouffe, the dark side of relations of mutuality and reciprocity are continually denied by an Enlightenment tradition that runs all the way through to Habermas, whom she finds guilty of acknowledging only the rationalist aspects of human life and thereby foreclosing on "the recognition that violence is ineradicable."[24] A recurring theme in Mouffe's appeal to authorities such as Schmitt and Girard is her conflation of antagonism with violence.

Mouffe assimilates both Schmitt's account of the concept of the political and Girard's theory of mimetic desire into a generic poststructuralist account of identity formation, one in which the pivotal concept is the "constitutive outside." The authority for this idea depends in no small part on the reference made to Jacques Derrida as its source. Derrida is often invoked to provide philosophical authority for the ontology of antagonism first outlined by Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. In that account, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the delimitation of any political community is necessarily constituted through a process of exclusion. Their theoretical model draws most heavily on a psychoanalytical imagination, one indebted to Lacan's account of the original division of the subject in a scene of foundational "aggressivity," generating what he calls "the self's radical ex-centricity to itself."[25] But Mouffe claims Derrida as the authority for the most general version of the thesis: "One of Derrida's central ideas is that the constitution of an identity is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the resultant two poles—form/matter, essence/accident, black/white, man/woman, and so on." In this interpretation, the importance of Derrida's

philosophy lies in demonstrating that "any social objectivity is constituted through acts of power." And in turn this means, Mouffe argues, "any social objectivity is ultimately political and has to show traces of the exclusion which governs its constitution, what we can call its 'constitutive outside.'"[26]

The notion of the constitutive outside has become something of an axiom in contemporary critical thought. But it is worth noting that the idea is not directly derived from Derrida at all. It is sourced from a Wittgensteinian, we might even say *ordinary*, interpretation of Derrida's work.[27] Henry Staten uses the term to refer to the trope in Derrida's writing in which apparently self-present phenomena are shown to be open and contaminated by otherness. This is not at all the same thing as claiming that identity is formed through the projection or abjection of a figure that both anchors and threatens identity. If the idea of the constitutive outside has a reference in Derrida's work, then it is less as a model of an active process of constitution through exclusion and more along the lines of the analysis of the strange logic of the supplement, the trace, or *différance*. None of these terms is a figure for an active process. In fact, Derrida does not present figures of the outside as primarily effects of exclusion at all. Mouffe's account of the constitutive outside therefore joins two quite distinct senses of the concept of Other. In the generic poststructuralist model of identity formation, the Other is posited as the projection of an active subject. Alternatively, the figure of the Other both in psychoanalysis and in strands of messianic thought elaborated by thinkers such as Emmanuel Levinas as well as Derrida himself does not refer to a projected image, nor even to empirically specifiable categories of marginalized persons. It refers to the "wholly other," to an element that cannot be assimilated into a subject's experience, perception, or reasoned conceptualization.[28] By linking the latter sense of Other to the former, Mouffe is able to present Derrida as the source for an understanding of identity as the effect of forms of power, exercised through decisive acts of exclusion that constitute the social field. It is then a short step to the claim that social objectivity is therefore the effect of a motivated political "decision" of exclusion and hegemonic closure.

The elision of the figure of the "wholly other" in the model of exclusionary difference proffered by Mouffe's authoritative interpretation of "the constitutive outside" underwrites the ontologization of the distinction between politics and the political in her theory of radical democracy. In this move, the possibility of pluralistic sociability is made derivative of a more fundamental level of intractable antagonism. So it is that Mouffe arrives at the conclusion that the political refers to "the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations." Politics, on the other hand, refers to the practices through which this realm of conflict is ordered, shaped, given form: "'Politics' consists of domesticating hostility and in trying to defuse the potential antagonism that exists in human relations."[29]

There is a familiar spatial imagination at work in the generic model of the constitutive outside: "There is no consensus without exclusion, no 'we' without a

'they' and no politics is possible without the drawing of a frontier." If you take this general model of identity formation and splice it with the more specific idea that all political identities depend on drawing a we/they distinction, then it follows that "the possibility of the emergence of antagonism can never be eliminated."[30] Against Schmitt, Mouffe argues that there is no necessary reason for antagonism to always appear as a relation of enmity. The task of democratic politics, for Mouffe, is to create conditions "that make it less likely for such a possibility to emerge."[31] Mouffe's conceptual innovation is to differentiate antagonism, understood as an ever-present possibility of all politics, from agonism. Antagonism is a relation between enemies, defined by the lack of shared or common symbolic space between two parties to a conflict. Agonism, for her, is a relation not between enemies but between adversaries, who do share a common space: "While antagonism is a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies who do not share any common ground, agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents."[32] In this understanding, Mouffe asserts that "the aim of democratic politics is to transform *antagonism* into *agonism*."[33] This task involves providing channels for the expression of collective passions that do not degenerate into relations of enmity.

Mouffe's account of radical democracy therefore depends on two distinct conceptual moves. The first is an interpretation of the distinction between politics and the political as structurally equivalent to the Heideggerian distinction between the ontic and the ontological, where the former is interpreted as derivative of the latter, more fundamental layer.[34] The second move involves a particular determination of the *content* of the political, once set off against politics, in terms of antagonism, hostility, and ineradicable conflict. We have seen, in the work of Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, for example, that the first, more formal move does not necessarily have to be given this particular inflection—it can just as easily be filled in with a more associative meaning of the political. Between the two moves that underwrite Mouffe's account of the political, antagonism appears both as the general ontological condition of the political and as something that might also always find expression in the field of politics.

Agonism is therefore accorded only a derivative status in Mouffe's account. Her vision of agonism is certainly quite different from a vision of rationally arrived at consensus. On the basis of the ontological account of the political as necessarily crossed by antagonistic hostility, Mouffe asserts "the impossibility of rational consensus on political decisions." The prime task of democratic politics "is not to eliminate passions from the sphere of the public, in order to render a rational consensus possible, but to mobilize those passions towards democratic designs."[35] The target of this injunction is those political theories that posit an "overlapping consensus" (Rawls) or perhaps an "ideal speech situation" (Habermas) as some form of regulative ideal for shaping political action. For Mouffe, the failure of these

types of "liberal" theory is twofold. It is a failure to grasp the ontological status of antagonism as the condition of all objectivity. And it is in turn a failure to grasp the hegemonic constitution of the social, that is, the way in which social objectivity is inevitably formed through acts of power that enforce closure, exclusion, and decisions on an inherently open and fluid field.[36] In Mouffe's view, any idea of consensus is rendered suspect by the fact that the constitution of any community of agreement would necessarily depend on demarcating an external, excluded outside: "The fundamental question for democratic politics is not how to arrive at a rational consensus, that is, a consensus not based on exclusion: this would require the construction of an 'Us' that did not have a corresponding 'Them.'"[37] So it is that the authoritative interpretation presents the notion of the constitutive outside as making consensus impossible.

Grasping the difference between adversaries and enemies is central to appreciating the concern that animates Mouffe's claim that thinkers including John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens, and Ulrich Beck are all guilty of offering postpolitical visions of democratic theory. They do so by encouraging a moralization of the political field and in so doing risk generating friend/enemy antagonisms. The same concern informs Mouffe's wider criticism of "the current infatuation with humanitarian crusades, ethically correct good causes and the hypertrophy of the judiciary."[38] These phenomena are all presented as examples of a moralizing liberalism that thinks politics can be reduced to rational procedures. And Mouffe finds the same impulse to overlook the constitutive antagonisms of the political to be at work in strands of radical political thought that reject the institutions and practices of representative democracy in favor of images of reciprocal community and autonomous organization.[39] In her engagements across this range of contemporary thought and political practice, Mouffe's insistence that the dimension of antagonism is an ineradicable feature of politics is based on the anxiety that denying this dimension only encourages a tendency to articulate we/they relations in moralized terms of good versus evil that can have potentially disastrous consequences.

Mouffe does not endorse the strongly ethical inflection found in Derrida's work, and certainly not the reactionary conservatism more or less implicit in some of the other sources to which she appeals. She does strongly affirm the idea that democracy is a way of keeping various relations in tension, not least through the cultivation of a democratic culture that remains open to contestation and dispute. In Mouffe's terms, the moralization of politics forecloses the possibility of the emergence of agonistic forms of political conflict, and by inadvertently encouraging the emergence of antagonistic confrontation, it might therefore actually threaten democratic politics. Her account of agonistic democracy finds in various strands of liberal political thought, but also in strands of radical theory, a constant tendency to seek to reduce constitutive energies of division and conflict, which actually risks undermining democracy by moralizing what are properly political

relations. And although Mouffe never puts it quite like this herself, the force of her argument about the dangers of postpolitical reasoning rests on the strong implication that it represents a disavowal of "the vocation of politics" itself, if we understand that to mean the cultivation of a form of character able to negotiate between an ethos of conviction that prioritizes the virtue of autonomy and an ethos of responsibility for the consequences of actions.[40]

Opening the Political

We have seen that Mouffe privileges a specific understanding of exclusionary relations of identification and differentiation in her ontology of the political. Her account turns on a set of spatial tropes of boundaries, divisions, frontiers, and constitutive outsides. Mouffe's recurring claim is that the political should be understood by reference to the idea of ineradicable antagonism. She bolsters her claim with appeals to deconstruction and psychoanalysis, anthropology and political theology. Across these references, a set of recurring themes emerges: the idea that the political is defined primarily by an underlying dynamic of exclusion, antagonism, violence, or hostility; the idea that social order is constituted through the willful imposition of decision, sacrifice, or suturing; the idea that genuine democratic politics involves the contestation of the boundaries of the political; and an impatient disdain for styles of political theory that she considers too rationalistic.

As already noted, one of the distinctive features of Mouffe's account of agonistic democracy, compared to those accounts that emphasize the cultivation of democratic ethos, is that it retains a strong sense of politics being tied to decisive action, rather than merely celebrating the pluralistic play of difference over order and stability. Her affirmation of the political moment of decision nevertheless depends on a stark opposition between two distinct temporal modes of action: deliberation oriented toward consensus and decisive action without ultimate foundations. The recurring problem addressed in Mouffe's work is how the indeterminacy of the political, determined by ineradicable ontological antagonism, can be given contingent order through hegemonic acts of closure. This problem relies on an understanding of political time as a succession of moments that are either contingently tied into stable relations or just as contingently disrupted into new patterns of identification.

I would like to dwell a little longer on the style of concept formation that Mouffe's work illustrates. It is a style that turns on making clear-cut conceptual oppositions, layering of conceptual terms into orders of priority, and the systematic spatialization of political relations into stark contrasts between insides and outsides, identities and exclusions, aporias and paradoxes, originary instabilities and their derivative stabilizations. It is here that Mouffe's hierarchical derivation of the meaning of the politics/political distinction can be undone. Applying a simple

deconstructive axiom, one might suppose that if adversarial and agonistic politics depends on the domestication of ineradicable hostility, and if it is therefore always haunted by the risk that solidarity might dissolve entirely into populist antagonism, then it follows that there must be something about the political that lends itself to domestication and order in the first place. If the political is at all open to domestication, if antagonism can be pacified, it might be because consensual relations of solidarity, respect, toleration, and empathy always already contaminate the political. In short, the movement of domestication or pacification that defines agonistic politics for Mouffe indicates that antagonism is perhaps not quite so singularly definitive of the political as she proposes. If domestication and pacification inhabit both sides of the border between the political and politics, then this means that antagonism and consensus, hostility and solidarity are related in a pattern that is not one of territorialized exclusion at all.[41] It is perfectly plausible to suppose that antagonism does not exhaust the list of features that might be ascribed importance when defining the political dimension of human affairs.

If antagonism is not, after all, the singular essence of the political, then this suggests that we might need to return to one of the issues raised at the start of this chapter. I noted there that poststructuralist theories of radical democracy claim that consensus is impossible, because it seeks to close down the play of hierarchical differentiation inherent in human relations. I also suggested that this claim, the theoretical background of which I have traced in Mouffe's work, actually misconstrues the pragmatics of political life. I want to further elaborate on this claim, not so much in order to redeem a concept of consensus but as part of the effort to deflate the ontologization of conflict that is a feature of Mouffe's agonist theory. We have seen that her account makes a conceptual connection between the temporality of decisive action and the formation of political community. Her claim is that the act of positing an identity both confirms and simultaneously threatens that identity: constituting "us" without determining a corresponding "them" is, apparently, impossible. We have seen that the assertion that the exclusionary relationship between identity and difference is unavoidable renders otherness into a strictly derivative term, distilled from the temporary stabilization of a properly open-ended play of differential meaning.[42] In this view, individual subject formation, the constitution of the social, and the delimitation of political community are all understood to be the effect of a constitutive act of arbitrary power that operates through closure or exclusion and that is not therefore available to an analytics of justification or legitimation. This account of identity formation is, as we have seen, justified by reference to Derrida, and inflected by reference to Lacan's account of subject formation as well to ideas of thinkers such as Schmitt and Girard. It informs a taken-for-granted spatial model in which the identity of any political community is premised on the expulsion or marginalization of another party, involving a simultaneous movement of repudiation as well as identification.

The theory of differential signification on which Mouffe's political interpre-

tation of the constitutive outside depends does not, I would suggest, provide an adequate appreciation of the political force of little pronouns like "we," "us," and "them."[43] Mouffe's account of we/they relations remains resolutely monological, consistent with the understanding of difference discussed in the previous chapter, in which the formation of political community depends on the willful power of nominalization to interpellate political subjects around fixed reference points provided by this or that empty signifier. Identity is therefore formed only through a Manichean drama of differential exclusion. This understanding implies that a political community can be conjured into existence simply by the force of collective will to share in such an identity. In short, Mouffe's account of political community depends on the idea that constituting a "we" is "an act of encircling an area within a boundary."[44] But the spatial figure invoked here is not the appropriate one at all. Recalling the two distinct concepts of the Other discussed in the previous section, we can see that Mouffe's strongly political interpretation of the theme of the constitutive outside wrongly assumes that identity is formed by actively positing a negative difference from other identities. But if, as Mouffe insists, "we" is the privileged subject of political discourse, then this proposition is better understood according to a spatial grammar of address and approach, rather than one of boundaries and exclusions.[45] This suggestion depends on adhering more closely to the drift of Derrida's own work, which provides us with a sense of community constituted by an opening up to otherness in situations of exposure and responsiveness. Rather than thinking of identity as formed by a constitutive act of exclusion, then, we might think instead in terms of a foundational receptivity, or of a constitutive disposition to welcome, as a spatial figure for the formation of political life.[46]

In the alternative picture I am recommending, saying "we," if we must continue to take this as an exemplary act of political life, is less an assertion of identity than it is an appeal for attention. Saying "we," as Hannah Pitkin once observed, "is entering a claim." She continues, "Part of the knowledge revealed in political discourse is the scope and validity of the claim entered in saying 'we': i.e., who turns out to be willing and able to endorse that claim."[47] The significance of this alternative picture can be grasped if we recall one of the central themes of Carl Schmitt's account of the political, namely his deep suspicion of forms of democratic representation as marks of division within a polity. The alternative account of the political as formed through claims to attention recovers the importance of representation in political life, where this is understood as a process of both speaking for and to others.[48] Speaking for others is often alleged to be impossible, and perhaps even a wholly unjustifiable impertinence. But perhaps we would do better to follow Stanley Cavell, one of Pitkin's sources for her view noted above. Cavell suggests that the ability to say "we" cannot be separated from the "arrogation of voice" involved in supposing that one can rightfully speak for others.

Cavell actually makes two distinct points on this issue. First, speaking for others is a possibility that is considered impossible or scandalous, he argues, only if one overlooks the relationship between *speaking for* and *speaking to* others. Following from this, he suggests that *speaking to* others is often presumed to be much simpler than it actually is. We forget that it is hazardous, that it works only at the risk of misfires and infelicitous outcomes.[49] The first point reminds us that political discourse is, preeminently, addressed to others—an argument we have already come across in the discussion of Arendt's account of judgment and political community. The second point reminds us that successfully addressing others only comes off if a relationship of attention between speakers and addressees, which cannot be guaranteed in advance, is successfully constituted by the response of the latter. The lesson to draw here is that if we keep in mind the hazardous quality of the process of speaking to others, we can better understand how speaking for others is not a zero-sum game of silencing or exclusion. It is an opening up of a scene of claims and counterclaims.

My reason for invoking Pitkin and Cavell here is to demonstrate that even if we hold to the paradigmatic form of action that Mouffe considers central to the formation of politics—convening a collective subject by saying "we"—there is actually no good reason to suppose that observable patterns of political life are always expressive of the temporary domestication of an abiding, singular will to hostility. Cavell in particular helps us see what is really most important about criticizing the traces of the rationalism found in various traditions of political thought. One of the criticisms leveled at political philosophers like Habermas and Rawls is that, in their influential formulations of public deliberation, they circumscribe too tightly the legitimate styles of communication to be allowed. While both writers emphasize publicity as a crucial medium in democratic life, they also seem to presume that public deliberation aimed at sustaining democracy and justice should be governed by the norms of civil conversation. The force of the criticism is, then, that these norms of rational, argumentative deliberation tend to elevate forms of discourse that are formal, general, dispassionate, and disembodied. Feminist theorists, for example, point out that, defined in this way, public deliberation "does not open itself equally to all forms of making claims and giving reasons."[50] In turn, this means that idealized models of public deliberation will silence certain categories of person and certain forms of injustice.

It is on these grounds that Cavell himself takes issue with the image of the "conversation of justice" in the work of Rawls, for whom the benchmark of reasonable public action oriented toward justice is the commitment to giving principled expression to one's grievances.[51] Cavell suggests that there are modes of claiming injustice that exceed rational discourse of the sort envisaged by Rawls. These claims can take the form of a cry of frustration or a scream of anger. They are, in short, types of what Cavell has called "passionate utterance" that work as much by

engaging people in relations that are expressive and that move them as they do by appeals to rational coherence.[52] Cavell's point is that Rawls does not allow for the full range of registers for articulating grievances and feelings about relationships with other people—ways that exceed rules, knowledge, and principles.

In short, Cavell's complaint against Rawls is that there is a multiplicity of ways through which selves and others become intelligible to one another and mutual accommodation despite their differences is made possible. In arguing that claims to justice are *shown* as well as rationally asserted, Cavell affirms that political action is irreducibly a form of public conduct that depends on scenes of address and response. If it has a favored spatial figure, it is one not of boundaries and exclusions but of the in-between.[53] If we are to take seriously the possibility of investigating various genres of reasoning through which political communities are convened, then it must mean that we should no longer assume that the political is necessarily formed by reference to a singular mode of antagonism. Or, as Engin Isin puts it, "The logic of exclusion based on establishing opposite others is only one among numerous and countless strategies open to the formation of identities."[54] Rather than search for sources of antagonism at higher and higher levels of ontological generality in order to secure the autonomy of the political, we need to pluralize our understanding of the sources of conflict around which democratic politics might form.

To help with this reorientation away from an ontological apprehension of the sources of conflict, we should heed the advice of one of the philosophers most often invoked in support of accounts of agonistic democracy, Bernard Williams. Williams was a long-standing critic of "political moralism," by which he meant the tendency to think that social and political conflicts can be resolved by the application of moral philosophy.[55] He argues that rather than seeking to eliminate or reduce conflict from human affairs, the more appropriate task is to consider more carefully "the significance of conflict." Williams calls for further analysis of what is at stake in observable conflicts. For him, to assume that democratic politics is weakened by conflicts of interest or differences over values is to get ahead of oneself. Assessing the significance of conflict does not require resolving fundamental disputes between, say, equality of opportunity or of esteem or between justice as equality or as entitlement. It might just as well require "sharpening them, by making it clear in what ways both have a foot in our sentiments."[56] Williams's argument is important here not least because of the sorts of ordinary disputes he has in mind when discussing the place of conflict in politics but also because of the sense he has of how these disputes arise from the ongoing flow of our lives. He does not present conflicts as expressions of some deep ontological layer of antagonism or hostility. Williams's assumption is simply that people have different views, interests, and beliefs, and these often clash. That's politics. Williams's account of conflict is a call for the further analysis of what is at stake in observable conflicts.

Rationalities of Action

I want to pick up on Williams's suggestion that we should seek to better understand the significance of conflict. Over the last three chapters, I have traced some of the conventions of a style of conceptualizing the political that is shaped by an imagination of closures and exclusions and ruptures in which certain ontological layers are given priority over others. Adherents consistently present this style in opposition to traditions that they dismiss as overly rationalistic, concerned with consensus, and encouraging anti- or postpolitical tendencies. Debates about agonistic versus deliberative theories of democracy are just local versions of a much broader framing of political theory as divided between rationalist theories and those in which human affairs are ineradicably shaped by power, difference, and violence.

The distinctions invoked to differentiate between agonistic and deliberative approaches to democratic theory are certainly important, but their conceptual arrangement needs to be adjusted. Rather than counterposing reason and the passions as if what is at stake is getting one's ontology right, we should think of these two terms as names for different modes of rationality or different motivating forces through which social life is coordinated. In order to develop this proposal further, I want to consider the significance of a conceptual distinction in Habermas's social theory of action for orienting further inquiry into the dynamics of democratic politics—the distinction between communicative and strategic action, or, between forms of interaction that seek to rationally motivate others and those that seek to influence the behavior of others.[57]

Habermas, to recall, is the pivotal figure in the second of the two intellectual trajectories introduced in chapter 1, the route that rather than seeking the origins of political change in deeper and deeper ontological layers seeks instead to rethink plural rationalities of action. In his social theory, Habermas distinguishes between *communicative* action, oriented toward reaching understanding, and *strategic* forms of action, shaped by an orientation toward success. Action oriented toward success includes both instrumental action, assessed by criteria of efficiency and shaped by technical rules, and strategic action, which seeks to influence the decisions and actions of rational opponents. Action oriented toward understanding involves actions that are coordinated "not through egocentric calculations but through acts of reaching understanding."[58] Communicative action, in this precise sense, is not primarily oriented by individual success but involves the collaborative pursuit of goals through negotiating the definitions of shared situations. If suitably refined, Habermas's distinction between types of action can be used to displace the stylized contrasts between rationality and passion, consensus and antagonism, that have often shaped debates about radical democratic theory.

Habermas tends to present the distinction between communicative and strategic action as a clear contrast between two competing modes of action: strategic

action, which concerns effects, consequences, and outcomes; and communicative action, which concerns mutual understanding and changing people's minds in reasonable ways. He also uses the distinction between "orientation toward success" and "orientation toward reaching understanding" to frame a historical narrative that contrasts the imperatives of "system integrated action contexts" with those of "socially integrated action contexts." In this narrative, steering media dominated by strategic action (i.e., money and bureaucracy) are progressively decoupled from the lifeworld, which he presents as the background context that sustains the interpretative resources made use of in communicative action. Those media then turn back around and colonize lifeworlds in turn.

The precise tone in which Habermas narrates the relations between "system integrated action contexts" and "socially integrated action contexts" has certainly varied over the course of his career. But it remains a consistent frame across Habermas's account of issues including international law, European Union politics, German unification, the rise of postnational politics, and democratic theory. Across this range of application, Habermas remains committed to the argument that communicative action oriented toward understanding is both normatively and descriptively primary to instrumental and strategic action. This commitment defines Habermas's decisive move beyond the model of critical theory inherited from Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's dark account of the all-encompassing pathologies of modernity.[59]

Recalling the distinctions that Habermas makes between two modes of action and two modes of integration is a first step along the intellectual path that avoids the contrast between consensus and antagonism, reason and power. It allow us to move toward thinking about the relationships between various rationalities of power. But in order to fully develop this alternative trajectory, we need to adjust Habermas's tendency to think of communicative action as entirely distinct from and always threatened by strategic logics of action. One place to start is with the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault is, of course, often thought of as a thinker wholly opposed to the project of Habermasian critical theory. Because he demonstrates that all human relations are infused with power, Foucault's name is often invoked as the authoritative source that completely ruins Habermas's commitment to the possibility of mobilizing the force of communicative action in the pursuit of democracy and justice. This appeal to Foucault usually depends on the idea that "power" in his work is really just a synonym for sublimated relations of domination or violence. But Foucault consistently uses the term "power" to refer to particular forms of *action*. With this in mind, it is notable that thinkers associated with the action-theoretic tradition of critical theory pioneered by Habermas have sought to clarify the type of action theory that is operative in Foucault's account of modern power. For example, Axel Honneth describes Foucault as presenting an action-theoretic insight in which "the emergence of social power can be studied on an elementary level in the action-situations in which subjects with competing

objectives meet and contend for the achievement of their aims." From Honneth's perspective, Foucault focuses too narrowly only on one specific dimension of action: "His basic model is the strategic intersubjectivity of struggle." In this interpretation, Foucault appears as a theorist not so much of power but of strategic action. Honneth accuses him of leaving no space for "normatively motivated consent," because his work presumes that subjects "encounter one another only as opponents interested in the success of their respective aims."[60] In a similar argument, Thomas McCarthy suggests that Foucault ends up "conceptualizing social relations as strategic relations and social interaction as strategic interaction."[61]

In finding an overly constricted view of action in his work, Honneth and McCarthy are nevertheless laying claim to Foucault for a tradition of action theory against which his authority is more often mobilized. And it is in turn notable that thinkers more sympathetic to Foucault's own project are also now acknowledging the action-theoretic dimensions of Foucault's later works on government and ethics, dimensions first noticed by thinkers from the critical theory tradition in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[62] The emerging view of Foucault as an action theorist allows us to loosen the overly rigid contrast between communicative and strategic action that Habermas holds to. It suggests a refinement of this distinction, rejecting the image of two mutually exclusive modes of action locked in a tragic struggle of colonization and survival, in favor of the analysis of the variable combination of different rationalities of action.

Habermas's conceptual distinction between two modes of action remains a crucial resource in helping us to pivot decisively away from ontological accounts of the double inscription of the political and toward the analysis of rationalities of action. Mary Dietz provides the clearest statement of how the distinction between communicative action and strategic action can be suitably adjusted to support such a reorientation.[63] She suggests that the distinction between communicative and strategic action actually operates on two levels in Habermas's work. In Habermas's social theory, the distinction underwrites the claim that communicative action has explanatory primacy over strategic action, so that modes of action such as conflict or deception are finally seen as derivative of action oriented toward reaching understanding. And in Habermas's political theory, the same distinction is used to develop a normative model of discursive accountability that limits and calls to account the operation of strategic action. Dietz explicitly raises the problem of what modification is required in the normative image of democracy once the explanatory claim about the priority of communicative over strategic action is called into question.

Dietz recommends reinterpreting Habermas's distinction between communicative and strategic action in an explicitly Machiavellian spirit. In one sense, this implies adopting a perspective that looks with great suspicion on claims that politics can be fully rationalized in relation to norms of validity, coherence, or truth in the way in which Habermas often suggests. But more fundamentally, it implies

adopting a more realistic view of the irreducibility of conflict in human affairs than is perhaps acknowledged by Habermas, but without assuming that this has to be rooted in a deep ontological layer of antagonism or hostility. Agonism, for Machiavelli, is simply a matter of the different passions that shape human life. In political terms, he argues that there are two basic impulses, personified by those eager "not to be ordered around and oppressed" and those "eager to oppress the common people and order them around."[64] These two "humours" characterize the common people and the nobility, respectively. The discord and tumult that arise from the confrontations between "the desire to dominate" and "the desire to not be dominated" cannot be finally resolved.[65] Resolution requires, instead, the institutionalization of forms of government that ensure that popular impulses against being dominated are allowed expression and effect. And the Machiavellian view of conflict as the basis of liberty is not necessarily the same as the argument that would reserve for the people only the role of contesting rule.[66]

Beginning with Machiavelli's analysis of the different dispositions shaping human life—those toward concord and those toward disagreement, or those toward domination and those toward freedom—Dietz seeks to reconfigure Habermas's distinction between communicative and strategic action. It is not violence or antagonism that forms the ineradicable core of the political, in her view. Rather, against Habermas, Dietz argues that strategic action is the irreducible aspect of what Merleau-Ponty called the "the milieu proper to politics": "*politics is an irreducibly strategic concern and a domain of strategic action*." Dietz makes this claim as a corrective to Habermas's tendency to suggest that the core features of politics can be modeled on his discourse theory of deliberative democracy. Dietz's point certainly holds against Habermas, who might well hold to an overly restrictive notion of strategic action undermining the orientation toward understanding. But the emphasis on politics as irredeemably strategic also holds against ontological interpretations of the political that we have discussed previously: "In identifying the strategic dimension of struggle that is politics, however, I do not mean to suggest that politics is fundamentally a context of domination, force, coercion, aggression, threat, or accusation."[67] This observation makes most sense if we see it as an effort to translate the debates between the Habermasian tradition and the ontological tradition into a concern with understanding plural rationalities of action. We have seen how one strand of the ontological interpretation of the political does tend to place relations of antagonism, hostility, or resentment at the center of its accounts. Because this view can perceive communicative dimensions of human life only as derivative and secondary, it can be "democratized" only by imposing homogeneity on the polity (following Carl Schmitt) or by appealing to a vocabulary of hegemonic closure and decision (following Laclau and Mouffe).

The idea that strategic action is the defining quality of political life helps us to move away from the ontological register in which discussions of the concept of the political and theories of radical democracy have become trapped. The important

lesson to be drawn from Dietz's Machiavellian reading of different rationalities of action "is that politics alternately tenses and relaxes somewhere in-between pure persuasion and pure force."[68] To put it another way, elements of communicative action and strategic action are always entangled, conditions of each other as much as contrasting imperatives. Furthermore, the relationship between them is not best thought of either in terms of an order of ontological or explanatory priority or in terms of a pathological detachment of social integration from system integration. It is, rather, a matter for further inquiry. By pursuing this train of thought, moving away from the search for ontological depths and layers and toward investigating the entanglements of different rationalities of action, we open up alternative sources of intellectual sustenance for a critical theory of democracy.

Cultivating Conflicts

Ontologies of the political and deliberative theories of democracy both have a tendency to posit one aspect of political life as having priority over others, and they then derive empirical expressions of political action from these prior commitments. In the previous section I suggested that thinking in terms of rationalities of action might enable us to escape the traps of heroic romanticism and rationalistic optimism that are associated with these two approaches, respectively. Dietz's Machiavellian view of politics as irreducibly strategic invites us to shift register and to think about the ways in which democratic politics articulates various rationalities of action. One way to develop the idea that conflicts arise through the concatenation of different rationalities in the context of situated problems is through an analytical distinction between "more or less" and "either-or" conflicts. Such an approach can help move us more decisively beyond the ontological determination of orders of priority of different modes of antagonism. It also will require us to shift theoretical register away from political philosophy and back toward social theory.

We have seen that poststructuralist theories of radical democracy emphasize the primacy of antagonism in defining the dynamics of political life. Of course, analyzing the sources of antagonism is a standard feature of political analysis, in Marxist theory certainly, but also in mainstream political science.[69] What is distinctive about Mouffe's claims is the argument that antagonism has its source in the very structure of ontology itself. I have suggested various reasons for deflating the claims made on behalf of ontological interpretations of the political, when presented in both associative and dissociative registers. Deflating these claims reveals that one can place the analysis of conflict at the center of political life without reducing it to a single, core essence. From a pragmatist perspective, for example, politics is the name given to a range of overlapping practices that address the persistent conflicts and disputes that arise from living together in a world of pluralism and difference.[70] One can also find the emphasis on conflict as an

ineradicable feature of political life in the Schumpeterian theory of democracy defended by Adam Przeworski. He proposes an idea of democracy as "a method for processing conflicts," an argument that is set against a long tradition in Western political thought that has looked on conflict and division with deep suspicion as well as against non-Western models of democracy that claim to embody unity and harmony. Przeworski argues that the guiding theme of democratic politics and theory should be how "to process conflicts in peace without curtailing political freedom." Such a view does not limit politics to elections, recognizing that "conflicts over policies, competition for political influences, are the bread-and-butter of everyday politics. Political activities are not limited to elections—not even to efforts to influence outcomes of future elections."[71]

Przeworski's is an explicitly minimalist view of democracy.[72] It is one in which democracy is defined as a system for processing conflicts, and this is certainly not to be mistaken for reducing, hiding, or controlling them.[73] His work illustrates that there are various ways in which one might conceptualize the ineradicability of conflict, contestation, and discord in political life without having to make strong ontological claims about the sources of antagonism. I want now to develop a different line of thought, an explicitly deliberative strand of democratic theory, but one, like Przeworski's, concerned with conceptualizing the rationalities of action that shape democratic politics.

To begin the task of thinking ordinarily about politics, understood as a concatenation of plural rationalities of action, I want to further develop Dietz's suggestion that political life is inevitably constituted by strategic action. To do so, let us consider another conceptual distinction, that between arguing and bargaining. Jon Elster presents these as two ideal-typical ways of coordinating action in situations of conflicting interests.[74] The distinction might appear to map roughly onto Habermas's distinction between communicative action and strategic action. But it actually cuts across it. Elster combines elements of both aspects of Habermas's distinction in a different pattern, so that strategic considerations are found to inhabit both arguing and bargaining. Rather than supposing that argument is the medium of virtuous deliberation, free from the instrumental impurities associated with market-like practices of bargaining, deal-making, or negotiating interests, Elster suggests that argument has various strategic uses in furthering the intrinsic values associated with democracy.[75]

Elster's distinction between arguing and bargaining is not so much a matter of different forms of reasoning; it has more to do with distinguishing the stakes involved in different disputes. Bargaining, Elster argues, is a "more or less" form of conflict, focused on splitting the difference. It is characteristic of fields of action in which material or symbolic resources and benefits are divisible. Wage bargaining over shares of surplus value, in the Marxist tradition, would be an exemplary case. Elster's claim is that there are types of conflict that cannot be resolved either simply by splitting the difference or by sequestering them away. The democratic

response to this type of conflict is argument, which Elster presents as a process in which interests, views, and positions are formed and transformed in an interactive process of engagement. In contrast to bargaining, arguing is indicative of an "either-or" form of conflict, characteristic of situations where there are competing comprehensive doctrines or values, as in the case of ethnic conflict or religious conflict. In fundamental respects, the stakes in this form of conflict are indivisible (for example, they might often take the form of claims and counterclaims to rightful possession of territory).

The contrast between arguing and bargaining is, then, an analytical distinction between two types of conflicts. It implies that some disputes or controversies lend themselves more to one version of action than the other. The distinction also suggests an analysis of different aspects of a conflict situation, an analysis that attends to those features that lend themselves to either-or or more or less forms of engagement or escalation. Elster's simple distinction can be located within the broader account of sources of social conflict provided by Albert Hirschman. Hirschman's specialty as a social theorist was in the development of counterintuitive accounts of the dynamics of collective action in markets, organizations, planning practices, and public life. His work displays an unusual sensitivity to the interactive dynamics between different actors, shaped by the organizational and material features of their fields of action. Hirschman sees these interactions as ones in which conflict and contradictions are central, generating experimental practices, social innovations, system breakdown, and novel forms of accountability and influence.

Hirschman's own intervention into debates between deliberative and agonistic theorists of democracy is oriented by a concern to move beyond the celebration of the ineradicability of conflict, on the one hand, and to avoid the temptation to develop rationalizations of consensus, shared norms, or community, on the other. He suggests that the agonistic tradition of thought that concerns itself with elaborating on the positive dimensions of conflict "tends to be so conscious of staging a perilous attack on orthodoxy that it often limits itself to accomplishing that daring feat and does not proceed to a careful examination of the conditions under which the paradox of conflict and crisis actually generating progress does or does not hold."[76] Hirschman's account of different types of social conflict is meant to help facilitate precisely this sort of examination of the different qualities of conflict situations and their evaluation. He starts with the observation, as discussed in chapter 2, that democracies tend to come into existence as certain kinds of compromise formulae, rather than through agreement on basic values. In short, Hirschman approaches democratic politics as a response to a certain sort of collective action problem in which enduring conflicts are transposed into new forms of accommodation, cooperation, and dissent.

Hirschman's claim that conflict is a pillar of democratic society is both a response to and a development of the argument about the difference between divisible and indivisible forms of conflict provided by both Elster and Helmut Dubiel.[77]

In making his own argument about democracy as a practice of "cultivating conflicts," Dubiel makes use of Hirschman's well known account of the dynamics of exit and voice as the mechanisms through which organizations engage with their clients, customers, members, or citizens.[78] Dubiel's key claim is that "democratic societies are held together not by the mute concord of their citizens but by the forms that give shape to their antagonisms."[79] This remark sounds a little like the arguments of Lefort or Mouffe, but Dubiel's authoritative reference is to Georg Simmel's sociological account of conflict as an interactive medium of integration and socialization.[80]

Cultivated conflicts are, according to Dubiel, distinct from both exterminationist warfare and relations of managed competition. But the idea of cultivating conflict that Dubiel recommends is not just about containing or framing more fundamental antagonisms. It is closer to the sense of tending—the controlled promotion of conflicts. And not all conflicts can be tended or cultivated: "The term *democracy*, then, embodies the institutions and legal forms, the psychic and cultural qualities, that have the capacity to 'cultivate' social conflicts. Contrary to a common misunderstanding, democracy has nothing to do with prepolitical consensus."[81] Dubiel's argument is that members of secularized societies relate to each other only via conflicts and that therefore political conflicts are the integrative force of such societies. His view segues with philosophical accounts that hold that, rather than requiring prior agreement to be reached on procedures and the bracketing passions and moral sentiments, democratic politics presumes that affective attachments to particular conceptions of the good can serve as a resource for cultivating democratic dispositions toward justice.[82]

While he argues that democracy requires the cultivation of conflicts, Dubiel draws an analytical distinction between what he calls strategic- and identity-based aspects of conflict. Strategic conflicts revolve around the pursuit of interests on a competitive basis, interests that are in principle divisible. Identity-based conflict is about issues of respect and recognition and therefore tends to be more indissoluble than strategic conflict. Dubiel insists that the distinction is between aspects of conflicts, not between two separate types of conflict: "While the distinction between divisible and indivisible conflicts has, then, heuristic and analytical value, all explanatory precision is lost if this analytical separation is mistaken for an empirical one." Real world examples will not map tidily onto this contrast. Nor is the contrast one between a level of more fundamental conflict and a derivative expression or layer of domestication. Dubiel's argument is that conflicts around strategic issues are also about issues of respect, that is, about both material resources and dignified existence. It is necessary to think of "the strategic dimension of divisibility as inextricably intertwined with the identitarian dimension of indivisibility."[83] Different types of conflict will combine these aspects in different ways.

If Dubiel is one reference point for Hirschman's account of different aspects of conflict, then the other is the work of Marcel Gauchet, a central figure in the emergence of a revivified strand of liberal political theory in recent French thought. Gauchet is one source for an account of democratic political life as being founded on constitutively divided forms of self-formation, according to which conflict is a factor in cohering and integrating social fields divided between "directors and executants."[84] Hirschman dubs his account of the dynamic of democratic community and conflict the "Gauchet-Dubiel thesis," but it is inflected in significant ways by characteristic features of his own thought. The legacies of Hirschman's own personal involvement with the German social democratic Left in the 1930s is evident in his recourse to a distinction between antagonistic and nonantagonistic contradictions. The distinction is derived from long-standing debates in Marxist political thought, stretching from Lenin through Mao and including contributions by Lucio Colleti as well as Laclau and Mouffe.

Hirschman locates his discussion in the shadow of this tradition because his aim is to deflate attempts to determine in advance the significance of certain sorts of conflict compared to others. The question of whether conflicts act as "solvents" or "glue" needs, he suggests, to be "brought down to earth" by being located in the dynamics of particular social formations. Conflicts in pluralist market societies can, Hirschman argues, be differentiated into two broad families: "Many conflicts of market society are over the distribution of the social product among different classes, sectors, or regions. Highly varied though they are, they tend to be divisible conflicts over more or less, in contrast to conflicts of the either-or or nondivisible category that are characteristic of societies split along rival ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines."[85] The key contrast Hirschman draws here, echoing both Dubiel and Elster, is between divisible and nondivisible conflicts, or between conflicts of a more or less or either-or type. Hirschman invokes the distinction to reconfigure the inherited narrative of the privileged significance of class struggle in Marxist thought:

> As is well known, conflicts of the more or less type are intrinsically easier to settle than conflicts of the either-or variety: even when the parties are initially far apart they can theoretically "split the difference" or "meet half-way" ("half a loaf is better than none") whereas these kinds of compromise solutions are often less available when the sections making up a society and coming into conflict are divided by matters of religion, language, race, or gender. In the light of this distinction, it is today difficult to understand how Marxism was so long so successful in presenting social conflict, impressively dressed up as *Klassenkampf* for "class struggle," as the principal, ultimate, and most irreconcilable type of conflict of modern society, when it is in fact the conflict that lends itself most readily to the arts of compromise.[86]

The argument here parallels that of Dubiel, whose account of the democratic cultivation of conflicts contrasts with a classical Marxist interpretation in which the political mediation of class struggle is understood as a mechanism for pacifying an otherwise revolutionary energy. Dubiel presents class conflicts as a model for more or less styles of conflict, that is, as examples of divisible conflict predisposed toward compromise. Democracy, in his account, is an effect of the cultivation of class struggle, not its containment. Marxism, in this understanding, misdiagnoses the dynamics of class struggle, because it assumes the contradictions between capital and labor will become ever more intense.[87] By contrast, and like Dubiel, Hirschman argues that the conflicts that are endemic in class-divided societies tend toward the more divisible type. Therefore they "lend themselves to compromise and the art of bargaining."[88] In this account, "muddling through" is the default mode of political life in class-divided democracies.

The arguments of Dubiel, Elster, and Hirschman challenge the underlying view of radical politics in both Marxist and post-Marxist political theories, in which specific models of conflict are prioritized in advance and then used to diagnose the contemporary conjuncture: the fundamental contradictions of class struggle for classical Marxism, or the ontology of ineradicable antagonism for post-Marxist radical pluralism. All three thinkers are adept at making analytical distinctions rather than strongly ontological ones, suggesting an alternative mode of inquiry based on more careful attention to the defining qualities of different conflicts. In this spirit, I would recommend another of Hirschman's concepts, which is concerned with addressing the emergence of democratic politics around situations of injustice. In his work on the determinants of the success or failure of large-scale modernizing development projects, Hirschman once argued that attention should be paid to the "structural characteristics" of different fields of action, in order to better understand the forms of leverage different actors possess to shape outcomes and processes. This involves examining the degrees of "discipline" or "latitude" for creative action that are created by particular configurations of materials, technology, market dynamics, and organizational form in particular fields. The assumption is that different fields of action—the development of railway systems compared to road transport systems, for example—will be characterized by particular patterns of behavior, adjustment, learning, risk, innovation, and conflict.[89] The differentiated analysis of the structural characteristics of fields of action underwrites Hirschman's well-known account of the dynamics of exit and voice as two routes through which situated actors may be able to assert some level of influence over firms, politicians, or officials. My suggestion is that investigating the plural rationalities of action that shape democratic politics might be well served by pursuing further inquiry into the structural characteristics of different forms of contention. It is a prerequisite for identifying the experiences of wrong and the forms of accommodation that give political life its distinctive, variable shapes.

Back to the Rough Ground

In the course of this chapter, I have sought to give weight to the "varieties of agonism" that can be found in political thought.[90] The reason to do so is to displace the authoritative account of the primacy of antagonism, hostility, and violence that has come to characterize radical ontologies of the political. There is no need to accept the trap of presuming that the only available options are rationalistic consensus or agonistic pluralism.[91] We have seen that it is common enough to accuse various liberal traditions of displacing politics by developing moralized theories of justice or rationalistic theories of consensus. But the last three chapters have traced the ways in which self-consciously radical ontologies of the political work to displace politics in a different way. They do so by insisting that ordinary understandings of politics need to be supplanted so that we can grasp the core dynamics of the political and enable genuine political action. In short, if we accept the framing of debates in terms of consensus versus contestation, rationality versus power, deliberation versus agonism, we run the risk that politics as an ordinary phenomenon will disappear from view.

Attending to the plural rationalities through which political action arises and develops provides a route for moving back toward the rough ground in which democratic politics emerges as a series of problems. In shifting attention away from the ontological register in which theories of the political are often couched and toward an action-theoretic register that can encompass Habermas and Foucault, Elster and Hirschman, I have tried to avoid becoming trapped in the terms of a debate in which ontologies of the political have a built-in advantage. The key to this shift lies in following Dietz's suggestion that the political is characterized by strategic forms of action.

When rendered in strongly ontological registers, agonistic accounts of democracy suffer from a rather one-sided view of democracy in which proper democratic energies are always reserved for fundamental reconfigurations or disruptions of whole political systems. The work of Jacques Rancière, discussed in chapter 4, marks a high point of this view, presenting democratic politics as a rare and momentary fracturing of the deep consensual frame that otherwise orders normal routines. But it is just one version of a more broadly shared spatialization of the political in terms of fixed orders and the temporary exposure of their contingency. The excess of the political over any particular configuration of politics is made visible through a vocabulary of boundaries, closures, and exclusions, on the one hand, and ruptures, disruptions, and events, on the other. The spatial image of closure supports and is sustained by the temporal image of the punctual event that resists institutionalization.

I suggested in chapter 4 that ontological interpretations of the political are characterized by a layering of the distinction between politics and the political into hierarchical orders of conceptual priority, and that this in turn informs the

systematic spatialization of political relations in stark contrasts between insides and outsides, identities and exclusions, originary instabilities and their derivative stabilizations. For all the stated investment in antifoundationalist accounts of contingency and paradox, this genre of political thought, with its vocabulary of instituted orders and overbearing constituted powers, is marked by a continued investment in an image of the totalized closure of the social field. Shorn of the sociological baggage of classes, the economistic residues of forces and relations of production, and political attachments to the Party, post-Marxist ontologies of the political nevertheless remain strongly wedded to what Roberto Unger has called "structure fetishism," only now the structure in question is that of the very ontological constitution of the world as such. Structure fetishism is expressed in the view of change "that opposes interludes of effervescence, charisma, mobilization, and energy to the ordinary reign of institutionalized routine, when, half asleep, we continue to act out the script written in the creative intervals."[92] The idea that insurgent action disrupts routines and opens up authentic freedom but that the forces of order will inevitably clamp down again on the rebellious spirit remains remarkably resilient in radical ontologies of the political. This idea is in turn a sign of a lingering sense that crisis is the central dynamic of political change.[93]

To give an impression of the differences in interpretations of the concept of the political that I have sought to draw out in part 2 and to move toward fleshing out the alternative, action-theoretic perspective further in part 3, I close this chapter by considering Francis Fox Piven's account of "dissensus politics." Piven's narrative of episodic periods of egalitarian reform in the United States ascribes a pivotal role to protest movements, able to intermittently exercise influence in between periods of elite domination.[94] In that respect, it appears to fit into a broad paradigm of analysis that contrasts top-down impositions of order to bottom-up eruptions of radical energy. As we have seen, the picture of politics oscillating between periods of stability and temporary periods of intense disruption is a recurring motif of radical political thought. What is distinctive about Piven's argument is that for her the politics of dissensus is intimately entangled with, and indeed dependent on, the rhythms and routines of electoral politics and policy making. Piven's version of the temporal contrast between order and disruption is rooted in a sociologically thick understanding of the dynamics of popular mobilization and of the routines of state-society interaction. It draws on an analysis of the history of poor people's movements that emphasizes the difficulties of mobilization and organization and the resulting tendency for influence to be expressed through protest and riotous assembly.[95]

Most important for the argument I will develop in the rest of this book, Piven's account of dissensus politics depends on a specific understanding of the form of action through which everyday life is reproduced and political action emerges. The success of democratic reform movements depends, she argues, on the interaction between electoral dynamics and what she calls "disruptive power." Disruptive

power is a form of power implicit in networks of cooperation and interdependence. The power of those at the bottom of hierarchies lies in "their ability to disrupt a pattern of ongoing and institutionalized cooperation that depends on their continuing contributions."[96] Piven's formulation of dissensus politics does not, then, draw a sharp contrast between action that is routine and action that is disruptive. Disruptive power involves the withdrawal of cooperation in social relations and therefore has any purchase only because it is rooted in institutionalized dynamics of interdependence.

From one perspective, Piven's account of dissensus politics appears to conform to a political imagination that sees proper politics as primarily about events of rupture that are fundamentally transformative in some way, interspersed with periods of settled order. But from another perspective, it is important because it identifies expressions of disruptive power and enactments of dissensus politics as continuous with forms of action that are embedded in ongoing patterns of interaction and cooperation. Developing the second of these perspectives is a central concern in my discussion of critical theories of democracy that follows.

The spatial and temporal image of sudden disruptions and ordered settlements is the conceptual accompaniment to the strongly ontological interpretation of the double inscription of the political. We have seen throughout part 2 that the intuition behind the distinction between politics and the political can be interpreted in a less grandiose fashion, in "descriptive" rather than "revisionary" ways, to use Strawson's terms discussed in chapter 3. The ontologization of radical political thought, and indeed of social theory more broadly, has the unfortunate effect of trapping us before a picture of the world in which movements of becoming, of fluidity and flux, and of process itself are understood as the defining ontological features of both human life and natural worlds. These features are also accorded normative priority over the stability, continuity, and order that they apparently make possible and yet that also contain them. It is a remarkably one-dimensional picture of how change happens and how to recognize it when it does happen. But there is little reason to take this picture quite as seriously as its proponents suggest. After all, unique, creative, unexpected acts are just as likely to play a part in the reproduction of routine actions as they are to disrupt or transform them.[97] The reason to leave behind the ontological interpretation of the political is to escape the overly territorialized imagination of enclosure and exclusion, as well as the temporal imagination of disruption and rupture that accompanies this way of thinking. In making the possibility of political agency dependent on the movements of ontological strata, it is an imagination that distracts attention from the ordinary forms of action through which injustice is articulated as a wrong in the course of political life. It is to this issue that I will direct attention in part 3.

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PART 3

Phenomenologies of Injustice

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CHAPTER 6

Claims of the Affected

> A functioning public sphere, the quality of discussion, accessibility, and the discursive structure of opinion- and will-formation: all of these could never entirely replace conventional procedures for decision-making and political representation. But they do tip the balance, from the concrete embodiment of sovereign will in persons, votes, and collectives to the procedural demands of communicative and decision-making processes. And this loosens the conceptual ties between democratic legitimacy and the familiar forms of state organization.
>
> **—Jürgen Habermas**

The chapters in part 2 tracked the way in which strongly ontological interpretations of the political are used to sustain a priori models of proper politics and real democracy. These models underwrite laments about the postpolitical condition as well as excited declarations of the radical potential of dramatic protest events. From within this worldview, properly political events have no determinative content—they exceed given forms of expression and order. Political events occur when singularities that cannot be represented in current formations of political life make their presence felt. Across their variety, whether informed by readings of Spinoza or strands of Left-Heideggerian thought or post-Althusserian accounts of political subjectification, ontologies of the political make politics derivative of more fundamental forces of constitution and disruption.

Part 3 shifts away from this paradigm of political interpretation, and its attendant spatial and temporal imaginations, toward the further elaboration of an action-theoretic perspective. It picks up the issue with which chapter 2 ended, namely the question of where one might find theoretical resources for better understanding the proposition that democracy is an emergent form, the meaning of which arises in problematic situations of conflict. In the following three chapters I focus on the degree to which a sensitivity to the experience and articulation of felt senses of injustice has become central to the reconfiguration of the tradition of critical theory as a theory of radical democracy.

I am not recommending a revival of critical theory understood narrowly as a model for the critique of instrumental reason.[1] I am, rather, thinking of critical theory as a living tradition of thought, which has been transformed into a theory of radical democracy and has also undergone a veritable spatial turn of its own. In tracing the ways in which ideas of affectedness, domination, and freedom are conceptualized across the work of various thinkers, part 3 brings into view the emergent understanding of political action that is shared across this living tradition, one that accords primacy to situated experiences of wrong that are articulated through practices of public claims-making.

The understanding of critical theory that I am making use of here is best captured by Seyla Benhabib's genealogy of two distinct but inseparable dimensions of critique. The first is an explanatory-diagnostic analysis of the sources of oppression, exploitation, and injustice in the world. The second is an anticipatory-utopian critique of existing norms and values. Crucially, this dimension also includes an assessment of the demands made by movements "and interprets their potential to lead toward a better and more humane society."[2]

The significance of this view of critical theory lies in the suggestion that being critical does not simply involve unmasking the operations of power. Nor is it enough to simply identify objective, systematic crisis tendencies or causes of injury or even to develop normative theories of justice or democracy. Critique should also inquire into how systematic processes generate experiences such as "suffering, humiliation, aggression, and injustice," experiences that "in turn can lead to resistance, protest, and organized struggle."[3]

My argument for giving priority to injustice in theorizing democratic politics depends on working through the conceptual transformation of the principle of "all affected interests." The idea that all those affected by a course of action should have some say in formulating decisions around that action is a basic feature of ordinary ways of talking about democracy: "*What touches all should be decided by all.*"[4] It is also a more or less explicit principle in different traditions of democratic theory. It is implicit, for example, in the accounts of the political found in the work of writers such as Arendt, Wolin, and Lefort, for whom politics primarily concerns collectively shared matters of concern and action. It has informed the resurgence of participatory theories of democracy since the 1960s. It is the operative sense of democracy in recent work by social theorists such as Bruno Latour, who seek to extend democracy to a realm of non-human interests. And in deliberative and discursive theories of democracy, the all affected principle is translated into a set of broad-based practices of participation in publicly mediated communicative practices.

The all affected principle can be used, among other purposes, to call into question the legitimacy of territorial models of democracy; to assert the primacy of individual human rights as benchmarks of democratic governance; or to assert the extension of democracy to include non-human interests. The idea that "what

ever affects all must be agreed to by all" is a principle of consent and an intuitive norm of democratic legitimacy.[5] It is often invoked as if it could serve as a kind of procedural rule for deciding exactly who makes up the political community. In this sense, it is presumed that being affected can be defined to discriminate between members of a political community and non-members. There are two ways in which the all affected idea is usually invoked to think about this sense of being affected. First, it can be applied on the basis that being affected varies from decision to decision, assuming that it is possible to delimit just who is actually affected on a case-by-case basis—an idea that can be either expansive or restrictive in its implications. Second, the idea can be applied by reference to an idea of those potentially affected, as in the case of environmentalist accounts of risk, suggesting the franchise be expanded to everyone and everything.

In discussions of the all affected principle, the idea of *being affected* has political salience only insofar as it is related to a sense that members of a political community should be able *to affect* what happens to them. Here, what is often at stake is a determination of the scope of decision making and the types of influence through which a political community can exert control over decisions.

When both aspects—being affected and affecting—are taken into consideration, the all affected idea appears to be concerned with the question of who should exercise power (and how). It is an idea that can be invoked to define either the scope of membership or the scope of decisional power.[6] Sometimes the all affected principle is used to justify enfranchising virtually everyone and everything. At other times it is used to justify disallowing the demos from making virtually any decisions.[7]

This chapter traces the ways in which the double aspect of all-affectedness, in terms of both being affected and affecting, is worked through in different strands of political thought. In particular, I argue that the apparent paradox of enfranchising everyone or restricting democracy to a limited range of issues arises from a constricted, overly causal understanding of the idea of affectedness. This argument leads me to reformulate the idea of all-affectedness around a threefold distinction between having an interest, taking an interest, and having the capacity to affect actions. Critical engagements with the all affected principle tend to be concerned with the overly restrictive view of how deliberation over shared interests can and should take place. The way to escape the apparent dilemmas and puzzles raised by the idea of all affected interests is to both loosen and refine our understanding of affectedness. The first step in doing so is to attend more closely to the transformation of the norm of universalization in Habermas's theory of communicative action and related strands of democratic theory—a transformation that turns the all affected idea into a norm of deliberative inclusion.

I will also consider how traditions of environmental political thought have been central to the revival of the idea of all affected interests in recent democratic theory. The idea of all affected interests is often invoked in this line of thought as

a kind of trump, so that the intuition that all affected parties should be included in democratic practices is used primarily to criticize the restrictions of so-called humanistic settlements.[8] I contend that the more significant contribution of these traditions of environmental thought has been to draw into view the unavoidability of representation as a feature of any vision of radical democracy. In this spirit, James Tully argues that extending the all affected idea necessarily requires a view of democracy in which "at least some representatives will take up the responsibility for presenting the ethical considerations of care for all members in the web of life affected by the conflict in question."[9] In raising the question of representation anew in this way, the idea of all-affectedness appears not so much as a way of settling questions of inclusion but as a way of problematizing practices of delegation, speaking for others, and acting in the name of others.[10]

Renewed consideration of the principle of all affected interests has also been particularly important in the reorientation of political theory around eminently geographical issues such as cosmopolitanism, environmentalism, global justice, and transnational migration.[11] It appears to be an intuitively geographical principle, supporting the extension of democratic politics beyond the boundaries of inherited political communities associated with the modern nation-state. In the explicit geographical turn in recent political theory, as well in arguments for respatializing democratic theory in fields such as human geography and urban studies, there is an unstated assumption that social science can effectively track the causal chains of contemporary affectedness and might therefore inform the effective redistricting of democratic practices in more inclusive ways. The following three chapters challenge the objectivist, causal interpretation of the all affected principle that supports this type of geographical interpretation. Each chapter elaborates on aspects of the conceptual transformation of the all affected principle undertaken by thinkers working in a broad tradition of critical theories of deliberative democracy. I argue that that this transformation of the all affected principle opens a space for a form of inquiry focused on understanding the articulation of experiences of the injustice of domination through the processes of claims-making and public formation.

On Methodological Globalism

As already noted, the revival of interest in the all affected principle is associated with a heightened focus in democratic theory on issues of global justice and transnational democracy. The flowering of debates on these topics can be seen as an attempt by political theorists and political philosophers to engage with empirical social science debates, primarily those around the topic of globalization. Social science is presented as a field in which new social facts are revealed, to which political thought has to adjust.[12] Social science is therefore restricted to a set of

merely descriptive tasks, so that critical insight is still reserved for styles of political theoretical and philosophical reflection.

One recurring reference point for debates on global issues in political theory and political philosophy is Ulrich Beck's social theory of globalization, according to which reflexive action is an increasingly common feature of an ever widening range of social fields.[13] Beck presents globalization as the deepening and extension of reflexive modernization, in a narrative that sees identities and solidarities becoming increasingly detached from forms of social integration once dependent on bounded territorialization. The breakout of geography in debates about topics such as cosmopolitanism or global justice is, then, a response to the specific forms of "methodological nationalism" that have shaped political theory and political philosophy. The social facts of economic globalization and global interconnectivity are seen to promise more expansive and pluralist solidarities and loyalties, ones that have the potential to serve as the basis for forms of autonomy that might be able to exert some democratic leverage over global economic processes. Discussions about globalization and democracy often presume that the global expansion of economic activities threatens, undermines, or reduces the capacities of states.[14] In this way of framing issues, space is understood primarily by reference to a bordered conception of substantive places, exclusions, and enclosure. The teleological endpoint of forms of normative analysis that combine a distaste for expressions of nationalism with empirical claims about the decline of the nation-state as an agent of economic coordination and social integration is a persistent tendency toward what I will call "methodological globalism."

The most explicit example of the idea of all affected interests being deployed to support a globalist image of political life is found in David Held's theory of democracy. Held argues that it is often assumed that democracy is based primarily on the principle of consent. Elections are often seen as the mechanisms through which the voluntary approval of members of a bounded territorial state has been sought and secured. For Held, this model becomes problematic in the face of the facts of global interconnectedness. He argues that in an increasingly globalized world, people may be excluded from participation in decisions that affect them by the territorial organization of democratic politics. Held invokes the principle of all affected interests to call into question the legitimacy of territorial models of democracy: "Territorial boundaries demarcate the basis on which individuals are included in and excluded from participation in decisions affecting their lives (however limited the participation might be) but the outcomes of these decisions often 'stretch' beyond national frontiers." Held appeals here to the all affected principle as a kind of counterfactual principle in order to develop a model of democracy that is centered on the principle of autonomy. According to this model, the primary democratic value is the idea that "people should enjoy equal rights and obligations in the political framework which shapes their lives and opportunities."[15]

Held's reconfiguration of democratic theory around a series of scalar models—from city-state to nation-state to globalized world—is just one example of how the problem of establishing the identity of the people has come out of the shadows of modern democratic theory.[16] Held's argument exemplifies a more general theme in discussions of the political significance of globalization, which are characterized by the recurring claim that borders and boundaries have become problematic empirically and therefore normatively too. One could trace the same theme across debates about economic globalization, environmental futures, international migration, urbanization, and other issues in which the spatial and temporal assumptions of democratic theory have been challenged. And a prevalent image of space is at work in these debates. They often rely on an image of the enclosed spaces of nation-states or cultural communities, so that the almost natural-seeming disembedding force of spatial extension dubbed "globalization" is presented as facilitating the lifting of artificial restrictions and parochialisms associated with such arrangements.

The contrast between enclosure and extension that defines the methodological globalism of contemporary political thought was, ironically perhaps, given significant impetus by John Rawls's consideration of whether the principles of distributive justice worked out in his *A Theory of Justice* should be applied beyond the confines of the nation-state.[17] Some writers have sought to develop Rawls's approach in this global direction despite his own reservations, arguing that it is indeed both plausible and imperative to extend and revise the scope of application of principles of egalitarian justice beyond the nation-state. Chief among those making the case for thinking in terms of a "global basic structure" is Thomas Pogge. Pogge's argument with Rawls is, however, not just about the appropriate scope of application of principles of justice. He argues that Rawls's way of reasoning about obligations to those less fortunate than oneself from the perspective of a potential helper is not actually appropriate to questions of global justice. What is required is an acknowledgement that "we" in the West stand in the position of supporters and beneficiaries of global institutional systems that contribute to the impoverishment and disenfranchisement of distant others.[18] Pogge's point is that questions of global responsibility are not merely matters of personal morality. They are primarily issues of equality and justice, and on these grounds he explicitly proposes an egalitarian law of the peoples, against Rawls's objections about such a global vision.

Debates about global egalitarianism rely on a contrast between (national) spaces of enclosure and (global) spaces of extension. The same contrast can be found in related debates about whether the egalitarian aspirations asserted by advocates of global justice are consistent with equally compelling principles of democratic self-government. Sometimes critics of the egalitarian view invoke communitarian visions of the requirements of shared cultures or values against the egalitarian telos of a global image of political community.[19] But the more compelling argument has a more democratic inflection. Seyla Benhabib suggests that

arguments in favor of global redistributive justice or global egalitarianism like those Pogge proposes tend to be monological in their mode of reasoning: they deduce principles applicable everywhere without considering their compatibility with principles of democratic self-governance in existing political communities. The universal egalitarian principles Pogge proposes, she suggests, are therefore not straightforwardly aligned with democratic principles.[20] Nancy Fraser makes much the same argument against what she calls the "dogmas of egalitarianism," pointing to the tendency to derive principles of global justice or global democracy from the facts of widely shared implication in globalized chains of affected interest. Fraser's argument is that epistemological claims about vulnerability and interdependence cannot be settled by "normal science." What is required is a wide-ranging practice of reasoning "in which argument shifts back and forth among different levels and kinds of questions, some evidentiary, some interpretative, some normative, some historical, some conceptual."[21]

For both Benhabib and Fraser, principles of justice must be interpreted dialogically, in the give-and-take of democratic forms of deliberation. They belong to a broader tradition of thinking in which theorizing dialogically about normative questions necessarily transforms theories of justice into theories of "democratic justice."[22] In this view, issues of justice are intimately related to patterns of inclusion in effective and legitimate democratic forums. The feminist critique of monological forms of reasoning in political thought is a key reference point for the discussion in the following chapters.[23] It raises, of course, further questions about how to conceptualize practices of dialogue. But I will argue that the significance of this critique also lies in opening up to question the adequacy of a simple spatial contrast between closed boundaries and extensive spatialities of porosity, circulation, and flow.

As I argued in chapter 1, attending to the specific understandings of space at work in political theories is no doubt important. But my intention is not to dismiss these strands of thought for having a flawed spatial ontology. We should resist the temptation to ontologize about space just as much as we should resist the temptation to ontologize about the political. The shift to strongly dialogical forms of reasoning found in theories of democratic justice certainly challenges the conventions of theory formation characteristic of methodological globalism; it should also challenge the conventions of criticism found in traditions concerned with theorizing alternative political or spatial ontologies. With this thought in mind, we might reflect a little further about what all this talk of borders and boundaries is really doing for these traditions of thought. In doing so, we might notice, for example, that both Pogge, in his criticism of Rawls, and Benhabib and Fraser, in their criticism of egalitarianism theories, invoke spatial figures of enclosure and extension in the course of arguments about the forms of reasoning appropriate for addressing normative issues of justice and democracy.

Debates about the significance of globalization for the meaning and scope of

human rights, the meaning of cultural difference and pluralism, and the source of transnational democratic legitimacy are all transpositions of older debates between liberalism and communitarianism.[24] Those debates often focused on the degree to which cultural solidarity is a legitimate consideration in determining membership of a democratic community or whether universal rights of individuals as persons undermine this model of legitimacy. The explicit spatialization of debates about issues of membership, exclusion, mobility, and distanciation in determining the meaning of rights and obligations should not, however, be seen simply as a "scaling-up" of those earlier debates over liberalism and communitarianism. In fact, the spatial grammar in and through which these issues are now discussed serves as the medium for a recurrent methodological operation undertaken by democratic theorists. Across these debates, globalization is the preconstructed real-world referent that justifies what Jean Cohen calls the "disaggregation" of key concepts of democratic theory. In Cohen's own work, for example, she invokes globalization to question the assumption "that the various dimensions of the citizenship principle must be aggregated into a uniform bundle of rights and protected by the same political instance: the national state." Cohen in turn calls for "the partial disaggregation of the various components of the citizenship principle." She suggests that the ideal of citizenship actually has three components: a political principle of democracy, a juridical status of legal personhood, and forms of membership. These need to be detached from the ideal of exclusive state sovereignty in favor of "a disaggregated model of citizenship."[25]

One can find the same procedure of conceptual disaggregation at work across a number of debates in which political theorists have taken up explicitly geographical themes. Globalization serves as a kind of preconstructed fact, against which democratic theorists refine key analytical distinctions. Various examples of this operation of conceptual disaggregation will be considered in this and the next two chapters. Each chapter traces different ways in which critical theorists of democracy elaborate on issues of political agency and the legitimate exercise of institutionalized power. Rather than supposing that the pressing task is to critique the adequacy of the spatial concepts they deploy, I propose that the best way to proceed is by asking what problems are made visible through the explicit spatial framing of democratic dilemmas. In particular, I will show that a central theme disclosed by the invocation of spatial figures is the recurring problem of how to theorize the relationship between the "influence" generated by social movements in the public sphere and the institutionalized "exercise" of power.[26] The distinction between exercising and influencing power captures the tension between arguments that democracy refers to forms of governance and those that tend to locate the force of democratization more squarely beyond state forms, in movements and public spheres. Joshua Cohen and Archon Fung refine this tension more tightly, identifying a fundamental difference between two approaches to radical democracy: one that emphasizes the goal of broadening participation, but with an

implicit acknowledgement of attenuated effects on the exercise of power, and one that focuses on improving the quality of deliberative participation and enhanced impact.[27] This distinction cuts across the deliberative versus agonistic contrast—we will see that John Dryzek, for example, shares with Jacques Rancière a strong preference for democracy as a contestatory practice and that Nancy Fraser shares with Chantal Mouffe a strong commitment to the need for institutions with authoritative decision-making power.

In order to illustrate the way in which the breakout of geography in political thought serves as the occasion to pick apart dimensions of previously unitary concepts and how this in turn reorders how influencing and exercising democratic power is conceptualized, I want to consider the example of Habermas's account of the "postnational constellation."[28] The animating problem in this account is the determination of the degree to which "the normative heritage of the democratic constitutional state is to function as a brake on the at present unfettered dynamic of globalized capitalist production."[29] Habermas here presents globalization as an external force impinging on the nation-state.[30] Accordingly, his formulation of postnational democratic legitimacy is framed in terms of the possibilities of expanded political forms being able "to catch up with the forces of a globalized economy."[31]

Habermas's discussion of the postnational constellation does not simply concern matters of spatial scale. It is developed against the background of his worry about organic images of community, and this is evident not least in his reframing of democratic legitimacy with reference to the all affected principle.[32] The idea of the postnational constellation is a response to the question of whether the demos of popular sovereignty must be rooted in an ethnically homogenous community. This is also the question at stake in Habermas's broader concern with developing a critical theory equal to the development of phenomena such as the European Union, international human rights law, and global protocols of geopolitical governance.[33] The explicit issue at stake in his discussion of democratic legitimacy is how to square principles of popular sovereignty with equally compelling principles of individual human rights.[34] But it is also shaped by Habermas's long-standing engagement with the unhappy legacy of Carl Schmitt's thought about relations between nations, democracy, and the rule of law at the international scale.[35]

Habermas's concern is, then, to detach republican political thought from its nationalist heritage.[36] In arguing against the claim that the demos of citizens must be modeled on the image of a homogenous, prepolitical community, Habermas makes a strong claim that the modern nation-state is already based on an abstract form of social integration through which human rights and democracy have been institutionalized. Whereas Schmitt contrasts the organic substance and harmony of the people with the empty abstraction of humanity, Habermas affirms that an element of abstraction has always inhered in national modes of solidarity. What

he sees as distinctive about the postnational constellation is that these abstract relationships of solidarity are now no longer necessarily contained within the boundaries of national territories. He proposes that the development of future constellations of democracy simply requires "a further abstractive step": "The human population has long since coalesced into an unwilling community of shared risk. Under this pressure, it is thus quite plausible that the great, historically momentous dynamic of abstraction from local, to dynastic, to national to democratic consciousness would take one more step forward."[37]

What is at stake in Habermas's claim here—about the need for a further abstractive step—is not simply the scaling-up of national models of democratic citizenship. He is using the figure of the postnational to fundamentally reconfigure the meaning of democratic legitimacy. Habermas argues that his deliberative account of democratic legitimacy is better suited to the analysis of postnational forms of democracy because, compared to models of democracy based on the norm of the nation-state, it affirms "a less demanding basis of legitimacy." The importance of Habermas's explicit rejection of the image of "the concrete embodiment of the sovereign will" lies not just in an assertion about the changing scales at which democratic politics is possible and required. More than this, Habermas's rejection of this image entails the detachment of democratic legitimacy from the ideal of embodying the singular will of all. He instead reformulates legitimacy in terms of an ideal of the deliberation of all.[38] Legitimacy is thereby defined much more loosely, at least when it comes to the assumed link between opinion formation and decisive will formation. On the other hand, it is defined more stringently insofar as normatively acceptable decisions are those that meet with the agreement of all the affected parties, who should have the opportunity of subjecting them to critical debate and discussion.

In fundamental respects, then, Habermas uses the geographical figure of the postnational constellation to present an image of democracy in which the influence generated in civil society and the public sphere is only weakly articulated with formalized centers of the exercise of power. And this also implies a more contestatory understanding of democracy, understood as a process of claims-making, than is often ascribed to Habermas.

Reading Habermas with a view to the spatial grammar of his account of the postnational constellation—in the sense in which I defined that idea in chapter 1, as a means of alerting us to what conceptual issues are at stake in recourse to geographical figures—allows us to see that the proliferation of geographical concerns in political thought is an index of the problem of how to locate the source and meaning of democratic legitimacy. In the rest of this chapter I will focus on how the translation of the problem of democratic legitimacy into a conceptual register that emphasizes problem solving through communicative action should also change how all-affectedness is understood as a geographical idea. In this translation, the all affected principle is transformed from a narrowly causal standard into

an expansively communicative and affective register of action. And, in turn, this transformation begins to bring into view the centrality of issues of claims-making in the emergence of democratic politics, a vital preliminary to grasping the meaning of domination and injustice to be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Having and Taking an Interest

We have seen that Habermas seeks to shift the meaning of democratic legitimacy in critical theory away from an image of the will of all and toward an image in which popular sovereignty is thoroughly desubstantialized—disembodied—and made dependent on "subjectless flows" of communication.[39] This loosening of legitimacy criteria both depends on the all affected norm and also transforms its meanings in fundamental ways. To understand the significance of Habermas's translation of affectedness into a register of communicative action, it is important to appreciate how this idea has been used traditionally and in turn how and why it has been revived in democratic theory more recently.

In debates in political theory, the principle of all affected interests is usually invoked in at least one of three ways.[40] First, it is often used to *diagnose* a problem with existing arrangements or theories. It is implicitly invoked in this way in debates about global democracy, immigration, and environmental politics: as a way of opening up to scrutiny models of nation-state democracy. Second, the all affected principle is sometimes invoked as a norm that can actually help *generate* boundaries, a task for which it might actually be poorly suited. And finally, it is often invoked to *justify boundaries*, a usage that implies that theorists should adopt the role of adjudicating membership of the demos. The question at stake in these varied usages is what political theory can be expected to do, not least the degree to which it is a legislative practice capable of deciding contentious political matters. I propose an alternative approach that is neither legislative nor conventionally critical. It seeks to make analytical use of the core idea of the principle of all affected interests by directing inquiry to analysis of how claims of injustice can be thought of as constitutive of democratic politics.

The claim that the all affected principle can function as a norm of democratic legitimacy often faces objections on the grounds that it is impractical, incoherent, and leads to the problem of infinite regress (an objection that presumes that the principle should indeed be used to decide on questions of membership or the scope of decision making). The place to start to develop the alternative approach is by recasting the objections usually raised against the application of the all affected principle as a set of questions that face any democratic theory. In this spirit, Archon Fung has identified three recurring questions raised by the intuitive sense that individuals "should be able to influence decisions that affect their interests": "What kinds of decisions and decision-making entities are regulated by the prin-

ciple? What kinds of interests grant individuals a warrant for influence? And, what sort of influence does the principle require?"[41] One or more of these three questions—about decisions, interests, and influence—is often invoked rhetorically to dismiss the relevance of the principle of all affected interests, because each contains an element of arbitrariness in its resolution. Fung's purpose in raising them is to develop a set of critical questions with which to address settled understandings of the decisions, interests, and influence through which democracy is institutionalized. This is the first step in our reconstruction of the idea of all-affectedness—thinking of it not as a principle to be applied but as a *rule of thumb* guide to further critical inquiry.

Ian Shapiro's argument for the importance of the all affected principle to a theory of democratic justice helps to clarify the direction of analysis that Fung's three questions point toward. In particular, it helps to make sense of the element of arbitrariness implied in each aspect—decisions, interests, and influence. Shapiro's ambition is to extend democratic principles to areas such as the family, everyday life, and work. No single decision rule is appropriate for all of these areas, he argues, but there is "a general constraint for thinking about decision rules." This is the idea that "everyone affected by the operation of a particular domain of civil society should be presumed to have a say in its governance."[42] This idea follows from "the root democratic idea that the people appropriately rule themselves." Shapiro describes the core idea of his account of democratic justice as "a causally based notion of having an affected interest."[43] He therefore interprets what he calls "the idea of affected interest" as "a causally based principle of legitimation": "The right to participate comes from one's having an interest that can be expected to be affected by the particular collective action in question."[44]

Shapiro's account of democratic justice combines two related ideas, one of which is traditionally given more attention than the other. The idea of inclusive participation is well established in theories of democracy, not least in discussions of the all affected principle. But the status of opposition is much less well developed in democratic theory.[45] And it is this second emphasis that makes Shapiro's account of all-affectedness most distinctive. He introduces a dimension of conflict and contestation into the center of a debate that is often treated merely as a matter of establishing a normative ideal of inclusiveness. Shapiro's argument is that both liberal and communitarian theories of democracy presume that membership in a relevant community has priority over questions of affectedness when it comes to determining the identity of the demos. He suggests that this idea follows from a contractualist way of thinking, rather than from thinking of issues of democratic justice by reference to power relations. The emphasis on power as the key variable in determining affectedness is the crucial contribution of Shapiro's discussion of the principle: "The causal principle of affected interests suggests that ideally the structure of decision rules should follow the contours of power relationships, not that of memberships or citizenships: if you are affected by the results, you are

presumptively entitled to a say."[46] Shapiro acknowledges the difficulties that this model faces, including difficulties "in establishing who is affected how much by a particular decision and who is to determine which claims about being affected should be accepted."[47] But he also points out that membership-based arguments are prone to the same issues of definition as causally based arguments.

For Shapiro, the reorientation of democratic theory around the idea of affected interests follows from the distinctive qualities of contemporary global living: "In today's world, actions and decisions in one part of the globe can be consequential for millions of lives thousands of miles away."[48] But Shapiro presents the idea of affected interest as a causal principle, not to argue for a single global governance structure but as a way to differentiate those whose basic interests are more strongly affected by an issue from those less affected. In this respect, Shapiro's argument is one example of a broader strand of thought that seeks to displace territorially embedded, membership-based models of popular sovereignty with a more fluid vision of overlapping modes of participation that operate decision by decision and in which "different groups of persons are sovereign over different classes of decision."[49] Using the idea of affected interests enables Shapiro to argue for the need to disaggregate popular sovereignty, rejecting membership "as an all-or-nothing decision-making trump." Rather, he endorses the idea that inclusion in democratic activity "is best defined activity by activity, decision by decision."[50]

While Shapiro may appear at first to be proposing a highly expansive interpretation of the idea of all affected interests, he actually introduces a principle of restriction by defining the idea of interests in a particular way. He points out that the presumption of inclusion is not always conclusive, nor does everyone necessarily have a right to their point of view being accorded equal weight: "There are often, though not always, good reasons for granting outsiders to a domain (who may be subject to external effects of decisions made within it) less of a say than insiders concerning its governance. Even within a domain there may be compelling reasons to distribute governing authority unequally, and perhaps even to disenfranchise some participants in some circumstances." He continues, "Those whose basic interests are most vitally affected by a particular decision have the strongest claim to a say in its making."[51] Shapiro's argument here reflects a broader feature of treatments of the all affected principle in democratic theory. There is a tendency to fall back on a strongly objectivist notion of interests to contain the more expansive implications of the principle. For example, Robert Goodin draws a sharp distinction between merely *taking an interest* in something and *having an interest* to determine the application of the all affected idea.[52] This sort of distinction seems necessary to sustain the causal interpretation of the principle of all affected interests, whether it is invoked in a critical spirit, as in the case of Shapiro, or whether it is used negatively to argue against more expansive models of democracy.

In centering his account of the idea of affected interests around the issue of

power, Shapiro shifts analytical attention away from trying to determine membership and provides a crucial affirmation of the contested dynamics through which questions of affectedness arise. However, the kind of causal account developed by Shapiro raises questions of its own. First, there are good reasons to question whether the idea of all affected interests *can* be treated as a causal principle in the strong sense he proposes—determining the scope of consequences and decisions might be more complex than the causal argument leads us to suppose. Second, there is the question of whether it *should* be treated as a causal principle in the first place. Treating affectedness as a causal principle, which is after all also what lends the all affected idea its apparently exemplary qualities as a geographical notion, might well misconstrue what is most radical about the idea in the first place. In Shapiro's case, the opening up enabled by asserting that all-affectedness trumps membership is promptly closed down by the presupposition that affected interests can be objectively determined. I argue below that the affected interests idea shouldn't be treated as a causal principle, and that understanding why helps us to appreciate why it can't be applied to objectively discriminate between types of interest on a decision-by-decision basis.

We can see, then, that the long-standing problems with the idea of all-affectedness continue to bedevil Shapiro's causal interpretation. Carol Gould identifies two recurring difficulties with the all affected principle as a guide for thinking about democracy, both of which help to clarify what is of most value in Shapiro's revision of the idea. The first difficulty is the impossibility of actually specifying who is affected by a course of action, because of the play of unintended consequences. And the second difficulty arises from the fact that different actors are likely to be differentially affected by any given decision.[53] Shapiro tends to make a virtue out of the second difficulty, suggesting that it is the basis for a model of decision-by-decision democratic participation. Gould's own development of "interactive democracy" seeks to address these difficulties by working up a notion of being "importantly affected" by decisions, where this is taken to involve people's ability to fulfill their basic human rights.[54] Like Shapiro, then, she uses the fact of being differentially affected to qualify what is ostensibly an expansive principle of inclusion. But in both of their cases, this move succeeds only in erasing from view the more difficult issue, the first of Gould's two difficulties—the question of whether a strongly causal interpretation of the all affected principle can be sustained not only empirically but also theoretically.

The recurring difficulties that can be found in revisionist accounts of the all affected principle as radical as those of Shapiro and Gould require us to consider more carefully just what kind of principle the principle of all affected interests actually is. This requirement is underlined when we consider how the difficulties that Gould identifies are sometimes associated with proposals that are far from obviously democratic in substance. For one thing, the view that the all affected principle requires a new constituency for each decision, recommended by Shapiro

as a virtue of the causal interpretation against the chauvinisms and closures of membership-based citizenship, also implies that citizenship rights would not be predictable and stable over time. Territorially defined access to equal rights, which is not necessarily the same as culturally defined membership, is a way of ensuring that political rights are not rendered contingent on determinations of valid interests.[55] To put it another way, territorially defined rights function as a means of establishing the security of rights, which is a principle not to be lightly discarded.

The idea that all-affectedness can determine those who are directly affected by actions is therefore not as obviously democratic as it might sound. The appeal to the principle to support a human rights centered account of democracy of the sort Gould develops, for example, might well depend on a rather thin conception of the conditions of democratic politics. As Robyn Eckersley points out, this sort of interpretation "dispenses with the whole idea of community, replacing it with a set of abstract individuals who enforce their rights under a global law." In the human rights interpretation, the idea of all-affectedness can be used to justify a mode of self-rule that completely circumvents problems of participation in the collective life of a community: "Abstract, legally mediated social integration replaces concrete social interaction in the demos." This view is perhaps best exemplified by David Held's democratic theory. When interpreted in this way, the idea of all-affectedness can easily be used as a principle of exclusion by "preventing those who are merely concerned (as distinct from affected) from engaging in democratic politics."[56]

Here I return to the double sense of both affecting and being affected that I have suggested is at work in discussions of the all affected principle in democratic theory. The interpretation that I am seeking to develop rests on recognizing a further distinction that Eckersley alludes to within the idea of being affected. To appropriate Goodin's terms, I distinguish between a causal sense of *having an interest* and a more affective sense of *taking an interest*. As we have seen, being concerned with a matter or being interested in it is often considered an unsatisfactory ground on which to justify democratic inclusion. Making a categorical distinction between these two senses of being affected is crucial to sustaining the strongly causal, objectivist interpretation of the all affected principle. The distinction might well be important, but we should interpret it less prescriptively, and furthermore, the binary evaluation of the dimensions might well need to be deconstructed.

Skeptical voices about the democratic credentials of the all affected principle should actually give us pause before accepting the causal interpretation of the idea that underwrites the geographical resonance of these debates. The most significant contribution of Shapiro's revival of the all affected idea is the part it plays in his reorientation of democratic theory around issues of power, processes of claims-making, and practices of contestation and opposition. But there is no reason to suppose that demands for justice are only articulated by those immediately affected by unjust decisions or by those on the wrong end of inequities. To suppose

that they seem to imply that political action is restricted to motivations of self-interest and thereby disallow any sense of action undertaken through solidarity, responsibility, or concern for the public good. Shapiro's strongly objectivist interpretation of the all affected idea, with its emphasis on basic interests and causal reasoning, closes off consideration of the combination of direct implication and indirect motivation that we might well suppose shapes political mobilizations.[57] To keep this combination of rationalities of action in view, we need to allow that having an interest and taking an interest—being causally affected and being moved to act—are not so easily separated as is sometimes supposed.

One place to start in freeing the idea of all-affectedness from an overly causal interpretation, an interpretation that maintains the focus of analytical attention on objectively determining who is to be included in a decision procedure, is with John Dewey's account of the formation of the democratic public as an expanding network of problem-solving communities.[58] Dewey's notion of publicness plays an important background role in various stands of deliberative democratic theory. Dewey suggests that the conditions for a new type of public life could be discerned in the spatial and temporal extension of consequences associated with the complex integration of modern capitalism. Herein, he argues, lies the potential for the enlargement of people's perception of being part of wider communities of interest. Dewey proposed that modern communications technologies enable people to develop "more numerous and varied points of shared common interests" and facilitate "freer interaction between social groups."[59] In Dewey's account, public formation depends on shared and contested judgments about both who is directly affected and, crucially, who is indirectly implicated in chains of extended consequences. Neither of these aspects, for Dewey, is straightforwardly subject to "objective" calculation. They are matters of deliberative inquiry.[60]

Dewey argues that the complexity of modern economic and social integration over time and space means that people cannot accurately trace the contours of their own implication in distanciated and distributed networks of actions and consequences. But they do become sensitized to the idea that they are indeed implicated in some way. The expansion of people's imaginative horizons is the mechanism for the transformation of functionally integrated systems into publics. This transformation depends on a capacity to imagine one's place in systems of widely distributed and indirect consequences. In this account a democratic public turns out not to be composed only of all those directly affected by the consequences of actions. A public emerges only when "the perception of consequences are projected in important ways beyond the persons and associations directly concerned in them."[61]

Once we countenance the idea that publics emerge through concerted caring for "the extensive and enduring indirect consequences of transactions between persons" along the lines Dewey proposes, then the number and location of those affected by complex chains of action and consequence expands beyond the scope

of easy comprehension.[62] The fundamental innovation of Dewey's account is the idea that public action depends on the capacity of actors to respond to events that neither directly affect them nor are immediately affected by them.

The importance of Dewey's conceptualization of democratic public formation lies, then, in allowing us to see that the notion of all affected interests is not best thought of as a causal principle. In Dewey's formulation, the causal interpretation of affected interests might help to determine the object of matters of public concern: publics form around the shared concern to intervene and "take care of" extensive systems of action and their indirect consequences. But the emergence of a public as a subject of collective action does not follow automatically from the cognitive apprehension of chains of cause and effect. Rather, the extension of consequences over space and time serves as the vector through which people learn to abstract themselves from their own perspectives. In short, for Dewey, a public is primarily an imaginative entity.

Dewey helps us further clarify the different aspects of affectedness I have already alluded to in this chapter. Not the least of his contributions is to differentiate between two forms of interest generated by "conjoint" action and its consequences—the interests of those directly engaged and implicated in such actions and the interests of those only indirectly involved and implicated.[63] Crucially, as we have seen, Dewey accords primacy to the latter type of interest in accounting for the emergence of democratic publicness. This emphasis on the apprehension of indirect implication in extended and enduring consequences supports the refinement of the twofold distinction between being affected and affecting. We can split the aspect of being affected in two, so that we can distinguish *having an interest* in an issue from *taking an interest* in one. The latter sense directs attention to capacities for acknowledgment, imagination, identification, and recognition. The purpose in splitting the sense of being affected in this way is not, though, to distinguish between groups of people affected by decisions in different ways. It is to distinguish aspects of being affected. Alongside these two aspects of being affected, we can place a third dimension, the aspect of affecting, of having agency or the capacity to act in concert. I present this more complex, threefold sense of the aspects of affectedness in a Deweyan spirit, as a framework for further inquiry.[64] It suggests a more nuanced approach to investigating the geographies of emergent democratic politics than is found in either ontological interpretations of the political or in democratic theory marked by an overinvestment in methodological globalism.

In order to further specify what is at stake in emphasizing the necessarily imaginative formation of what we might now call communities of affected interest, and the degree to which this process depends on the cultivation of a capacity for abstraction from objectively determinate conditions, in the next section I return to how the idea of all affected interests is transformed in the democratic theory of communicative action inaugurated by Habermas. Habermas's reconstruction

of the norm of all-affectedness is a central reference point for the geographical turn in critical theories of democracy more generally. It relies on a pragmatist understanding in which the emergence of democratic action is a response to problematic situations that require the generation and regulation of collective power.[65] I will argue that fully appreciating the significance of the reconstruction of this norm actually requires a reconsideration of the globalist imagination underwriting debates about deliberative democracy.

Reasonable Universalisms

Contemporary debates about the geographical aspects of democracy often turn on a tension between two dimensions of democratic inclusion: a dimension of belongingness, based on a communitarian principle of membership, and a more cosmopolitan principle of affectedness.[66] Habermas's development of a critical theory of democracy, based on a social theory of action and a normative theory of discourse ethics, seeks to reconcile and overcome the back-and-forth between these two positions. If followed through to its logical end point, Habermas's reconstruction of the idea of all-affectedness in the vocabulary of a theory of communicative action should actually transform how we conceptualize the geographies of democratic politics. It does so by drawing back into view the importance of situated contexts of contestation and communication, as well as extensive networks for exercising and influencing power.

The relevance of Habermas's work to our discussion of the principle of all affected interests lies in how his work loosens the sense of interests as objective or real that subsists in many contemporary accounts of all affected interests. In the classic model associated with the Frankfurt School, critical theory is meant to enable objective or real interests to be established among agents.[67] Habermas once provided his own refinement to this model, distinguishing between technical-cognitive interests, practical interests, and emancipatory interests, suggesting that these are mapped onto empirical-analytic sciences, historical-hermeneutic sciences, and critical theory.[68] His later theory of communicative action and his discourse-theoretic reconstruction of democratic legitimacy effectively subordinate the determination of interests to an intersubjective mode of assessment.[69]

The transformation of the idea of all-affectedness in Habermas's democratic theory rests on the claim that the conditions of possibility for rational agreement can be found in the dimensions of everyday action. Habermas claims that his discourse theory of legitimacy is postmetaphysical. a claim that has a precise meaning in his thought: "Postmetaphysical thinking turns its back on strong ontological conceptions that deduce normativity entirely from the constitution of being or of subjectivity." In contrast to the sort of epistemological or ontological

one-upmanship that seeks after infallible foundations, Habermas claims to develop an interpretation that "derives a normative content from the practice of argumentation on which we always depend in situations of uncertainty, not only in the role of philosophers or scientists, but already in everyday communicative practice when the disruption of routines leads us to reflect momentarily in an attempt to reassure ourselves of our well-founded expectations."[70] This postmetaphysical approach assumes that there are unavoidable pragmatic presuppositions implicit in the coordination of social activities and that these are best modeled on argumentative practice. Habermas's notion of "ideal speech situation" is not, in this understanding, meant to stand as a metaphysical foundation for democratic consensus. It is the name Habermas gives to the practical orientation to understanding that he claims is immanent in social interaction and from which a stronger argument about the possibility of rational agreement for both moral argumentation and justice is constructed.[71]

Habermas's reconstruction of democratic legitimacy therefore rests on a social theory of communicative action in which the idealizing presuppositions of everyday practices are formally elaborated by drawing on various resources from fields such as linguistics, psychology, and sociology. There are two important things to note about this way of developing democratic theory. First, it takes ideals to be immanent to social practice, not transcendent norms applied from the outside. Second, it is in important respects a fallibilistic account, insofar as it depends on the authority of fields of empirical social inquiry, and is therefore open to revision and criticism in the terms of those fields. For Habermas, philosophy can no longer reasonably suppose that it can escape this fallibilistic reference point.

These twin commitments lead Habermas to a distinctive account of the universality of democratic criteria. He presents a contemporary version of the Kantian categorical imperative, according to which one should act only for reasons that one can will to become universal principles. But Habermas argues that there is no need to imagine a form of reason that can transcend its own context in order to maintain such a universalizing perspective. In making this claim, he notes that criticisms of universalism often appeal to an image of context as closed and all encompassing.[72] For Habermas, agreement is an accomplishment achieved through an orientation to universality understood first and foremost as a horizon, not a ground or foundation.[73]

In elaborating on his discourse-theoretic account of democratic legitimacy, Habermas is keen to differentiate his model of universalizability from that developed by John Rawls in his famous account of the "original position."[74] Rawls's procedure proposes that the validity of reasons is determined monologically from a position of willful ignorance: "Like Kant, Rawls operationalizes the standpoint of impartiality in such a way that every individual can undertake to justify basic norms on his own. The same applies for the moral philosopher himself." Habermas suggests that Rawls's ideal procedure presupposes that the philosopher is an

expert qualified to construct a theory of justice. He disavows this position and instead claims that he is reconstructing principles implicit in action and doing so as a participant in a process of argumentative opinion formation. For Habermas, the universalization built into ideals of democratic legitimacy is not to be established monologically "in the form of a hypothetical process of argumentation occurring in the individual mind."[75]

By redefining universality as a horizon approached through intersubjective engagement with the demands and reasons of others, Habermas is led to the position that the universalizability of maxims actually requires that "just those norms deserve to be valid that could meet with the approval of those potentially affected, insofar as the latter participate in rational discourses."[76] He argues that this principle requires a revised notion of the impartial mode of judgment: "True impartiality pertains only to that standpoint from which one can generalize precisely those norms that can count on universal assent because they perceptibly embody an interest common to all-affected. It is these norms that deserve intersubjective recognition." Impartiality here is not a view from nowhere. Rather, in another echo of Arendt's account of representative thinking, the impartiality of judgment "is expressed in a principle that constrains *all-affected* to adopt the perspectives of *all others* in the balancing of interests."[77]

Habermas's dialogical reformulation of affectedness as the horizon of universalization is indebted to George Herbert Mead's account of self-formation through role taking in communicative interaction.[78] The significance of American pragmatism, for Habermas, is that it "made insight into what is in each case equally good for all parties contingent on reciprocal perspective taking."[79] He takes from Mead the idea that impartiality is attained not by turning away from contexts of interaction and abandoning the perspective of participants but by extending the perspectives of individual participants in a universal direction: "Each of us must be able to place himself in the situation of all those who would be affected by the performance of a problematic action or the adoption of a questionable norm. What G. H. Mead recommends with his notion of ideal role taking cannot be performed privately by each individual but must be practiced by us *collectively* as participants in a public discourse."[80] Habermas uses Mead's account of self-reflective subjectivity through the adoption of a second-person perspective to underwrite his own discursive concept of rationality, understood as a practice embodied in argumentative practices.[81] Habermas's version of egalitarian universalism therefore involves "a decentering of one's own perspective," adopting an attitude that "demands that one relativize one's own views to the interpretative perspectives of equally situated and equally entitled others." In this model of universalism as reciprocal perspective taking, the idea of the universal is rendered thoroughly dependent on processes of dialogic engagement with other affected actors.[82]

This pragmatist understanding of universalism informs Habermas's inflection of the all affected idea into the so-called discourse principle of democratic le-

gitimacy, according to which "just those actions are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourses."[83] "Discourse" in this account refers specifically to the practical deployment of argumentation. Habermas claims that in his understanding the principle "reflects those symmetrical relations of recognition built into communicatively structured forms of life in general."[84] Habermas's reconstruction of democratic legitimacy on the basis of an intersubjective theory of discourse ethics therefore effectively translates the idea of all affected interests into a communicative norm, so that the identity of those affected is subordinated to the principle of meeting with the approval of participants in practical discourse. The discursive notion of legitimacy rests on the image of a cooperative process of argumentation that respects individuals' right to judge what is in their own interests, on the condition that they are willing to subject the description of their own interests to criticism by others: "Needs and wants are interpreted in the light of cultural values. Since cultural values are always components of intersubjectively shared traditions, the revision of the values used to interpret needs and wants cannot be a matter for individuals to handle monologically."[85]

To reiterate, the importance of Habermas's work for my own argument lies in his transformation of the idea of all-affectedness into a thoroughly intersubjective norm of participation in communicative practices. His account of democratic legitimacy transforms the all affected idea from a concept of objectively definable interests into an emergent principle that arises from intersubjectively arrived at understandings and agreements. In elaborating on the idea that action norms are valid insofar as "all possible affected persons" agree to them in rational discourse, Habermas says "I include among 'those affected' (or involved) anyone whose interests are touched by the foreseeable consequences of a general practice regulated by the norms at issue."[86] And this reconstruction of the all affected principle is potentially highly expansive in its implications for understanding the potential scope of democratic decision making.

The discursive model of democratic legitimacy developed by Habermas should be understood primarily as providing a stringent principle of critique, one in which questions of all-affectedness take center stage in communicative practices of argument and justification: "'Discursive' procedures make egalitarian decisions dependent on prior argumentation (only justified decisions are accepted); they are inclusive (all-affected parties can participate); and they compel the participants to adopt each other's perspectives (a fair assessment of all-affected parties is possible)."[87] As already noted, this account of democratic legitimacy is tied to a claim that the conditions for rational agreement are immanent in the orientation toward understanding that underwrites everyday forms of interaction.[88] It is this emphasis on consensus as a deep background condition that most often arouses the suspicion of critics from within the same tradition of critical theory to which Habermas belongs. Part of the suspicion is based on an empirical issue about how

deliberation actually works.[89] But it also arises from a concern that Habermas holds to an excessively rationalistic model of consensual agreement.

In response to the latter concern, Seyla Benhabib seeks to rid critical theory of the "excessively rationalistic formulations" of Habermas's revisionary account of democratic legitimacy. Benhabib's revision of the discourse-theoretic view of universalism opens the way much more decisively than does Habermas's for the appreciation of the intimate relations between being causally affected and being moved to act that is central to the reconstruction of the principle of all affected interests in critical theories of democracy. She argues for a fundamental shift away from a legislative notion of rationality and toward "interactive rationality," a notion that in turn informs a principle of "interactive universalism." This is a form of universalism that takes difference and conflict as "as a starting point for reflection and action."[90] Benhabib therefore separates the notion of universalizability at the core of Habermas's discourse ethics, which rests on the idea of the reversal of perspectives and the willingness to take others' points of view, from the image of consensus as the final arbiter in disputes. She loosens this latter image as the condition of legitimacy and proposes instead the idea of democratic legitimacy as "reasonable agreement in an open-ended conversation."[91] According to Benhabib, this formula provides a discourse principle of democratic legitimacy "which enjoins that all those affected by the consequences of the adoption of a norm have a say in its articulation."[92]

The central theme of Benhabib's revision of Habermas's discourse ethics is the emphasis on "the capacity to reverse perspectives in practical disputes in general and the ability to reason from the standpoint of others involved."[93] Benhabib draws here not just on Mead but also on Arendt's sense of political discourse as a scene of agonism in which narratives and storytelling are a primary means for enlarging participants' imaginative perspectives. Benhabib's revision of Habermas's account of discourse ethics therefore transforms how we should understand the practice of argument. Rather than presenting argument as a means of settling disputes through the force of better reasons, we might instead emphasize a more resolutely pragmatist understanding of argument as a form of inquiry open to pluralism, dynamism, and revision.[94] In turn, this pragmatist understanding implies a concern not just with rational argument but also with a wide variety of modes of expression—or "genres of reasoning"—such as storytelling, testimony, and witness.[95]

Benhabib's notion of the "reversibility of perspectives" is indebted to Arendt's account of political thought as a form of "representative thinking," modeled, as we have seen, on Kant's image of judgment depending on the cultivation of "enlarged mentality."[96] Arendt claims, "I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them."[97] Benhabib uses this image to inform a concept of universalizability based on the capacity to reverse perspectives with others.

It is an idea that gives priority to "the willingness to reason from the others' point of view, and the sensitivity to hear their voice."[98] Rather than recommending putting oneself in the place of others in a form of empathetic imperialism, Benhabib places the emphasis on listening to the voices of others. She thereby shifts the image of representative thinking decisively away from any lingering association with monological reasoning.

Benhabib's account of democratic legitimacy as an ongoing search for reasonable agreement, involving a dialogical switching of perspective and listening, depends in turn on a distinction between two models of Self-Other relations, drawing on broader philosophical divisions between values of autonomy and dependence, justice and care, universality and particularity. The idea of the "generalized other" refers to an actor with equal rights, obligations, entitlements, respect, and duties. It is an abstract individualized figure, detached from the particularities of common life. The "concrete other" is an individual with specific histories, embedded in relations of sharing, responsibility, and feelings of love, care, and sympathy. These two figures are not incompatible—they are meant to draw into view two aspects of deliberation oriented toward reasonable agreements. Benhabib's concept of interactive universalism holds that every generalized other is also a concrete other. Democratic deliberation involves practices of "actual dialogue among actual selves who are both 'generalized others,' considered as equal moral agents, and 'concrete others,' that is individuals with irreducible differences."[99] Benhabib's notion of the concrete other is central to an argument for a "situated universalism," as distinct from a notion of universality that is a background set of presuppositions to be articulated by the expert theorist. Situated universalism arises from claims and counterclaims concerning the needs and motivations of participants.

The distinction between general and concrete other suggests a doubled image of democratic conversation about shared interests, one that disallows any treatment of reason and feeling as separate realms. In turn, it disallows the reification of justice and care as wholly opposed principles.[100] In important respects, the distinction provides Benhabib with the means to redress the lack of passion in Arendt's account of imaginative perspective taking.[101] In place of Arendt's deep suspicion of empathy and compassion, Benhabib makes the specific needs, interests, and emotions of individuals central to the process of interactive universalism, rather than depicting them as a threat to rational consensus. Benhabib's argument therefore presupposes that what motivates people politically is a set of concerns that have as much to do with relations with others as with material concerns of work, money, or power. In her view, "the phenomenology of our moral experience" requires an approach that is able to acknowledge the salience of the personal domain in the articulation of moral issues in the public realm.[102]

I argued earlier in this chapter that Habermas's account of deliberative democracy seeks to detach the idea of legitimate decisions from an image of the singular

will of an organically whole people. Benhabib significantly revises Habermas's stringent model of argumentation as the site of rational universalization. She emphasizes the agonistic conditions of situated encounters as well as the plural modes of expression through which matters of common concern are debated. In the work of both, the translation of all-affectedness into a deliberative norm displaces issues of legitimacy into a consideration of the communicative processes by which judgments, interests, opinions, and preferences are formed, tested, abandoned, adapted, and revised. This view of democratic legitimacy places the emphasis on the agency of social movements, nongovernmental organizations, and advocacy coalitions in lubricating the dispersed communicative fields through which globalized power is presumed to function—by raising issues, articulating claims, and facilitating dialogues. The emphasis on these forms of mediated agency indicates that while the presentation of all-affectedness as a deliberative phenomenon certainly supplants one set of assumptions about the organic unity of the demos, it does so only to open up a new set of problems about the legitimacy of the representative claims made by the multiple agents of democratic practice.

Extending Representative Thinking

I have argued, with a little help from John Dewey and Seyla Benhabib, that Habermas's theory of communicative action lifts the restriction on referring the all affected principle only to those who have objectively identifiable interests in an issue. It does so by shifting the attention away from the *who* of affected communities toward a series of questions about the *how* of participation. The shift is central to moving from a focus on the will of all to the deliberation of all that we have already seen is at the core of deliberative theories of radical democracy. But I have suggested that this opens up further questions, ones not so easily contained by straightforward images of deliberation. In order to fully engage with these questions, I will close this chapter by considering how the idea of all-affectedness has been mobilized in various strands of thought focused on ecological and environmental democracy. I am less concerned here with the claims often found in strands of this work about the ontological status of non-human participants as political agents. On their own, loud assertions about the extension of the franchise beyond humans actually threaten to reproduce the monological and causal models of evaluation discussed above. The more important aspect of these ecological and environmental strands of democratic thought lies in their explicit treatment of the role of representation in the formation of communities of affected interests.[103] This emphasis on representation helps to foreground more fully than in Habermas's work the degree to which all-affectedness is formed through processes of claims-making.

Far from being able to resolve the problem of inclusion usually addressed by

appeal to the all affected principle, this problem actually becomes all the more acute in light of the ascendancy of theories of deliberative democracy. The paradox that appears to bedevil the principle of all affected interests follows from the implication that either the franchise should be expanded beyond practicability or that the scope of democratic decisions should be drastically curtailed. This paradox seems only to be deepened once the idea is premised on participation of all those potentially affected in meaningful deliberations over decisions.[104] The sense that the all affected idea pulls in different directions can be finessed in various ways, including by the reduction of the number of people involved in deliberation through representative mechanisms such as parliaments, deliberative polls, and citizen juries or by the reduction of the breadth or depth of deliberation, thereby reducing the meaningfulness of the idea of deliberation. The sense that applying the all affected norm might be incompatible with commitments to broad-based deliberative participation is addressed by Robert Goodin's proposal of a model of "reflective democracy." It is a refinement of theories of deliberative democracy, but one with the distinctive twist of conceptualizing democratic deliberation "as something which occurs internally, within each individual's head, and not exclusively or even primarily in an interpersonal setting." "Democratic deliberation within" is Goodin's suggested practice for imagining ourselves in the place of other people, taking account of other interests, and thereby dealing with issues of scale and distance in imagining democratic deliberation.[105] More significantly, Goodin seeks to extend the idea of political deliberation as a form of representative thinking to explicitly consider so-called mute interests. His claim is that the model of democratic deliberation within is a better way of addressing the problem of representing "excluded interests" such as future generations and non-humans. Reflective democracy is presented as a practical response to the apparent impossibility of "enfranchising the earth" that seems to follow from applying the principle of all affected interests literally.[106]

At first sight, Goodin's model seems to revert toward a monological view of deliberative reason, appearing to contravene the principle of dialogical engagement that is pivotal to other deliberative theories of democracy. But it actually has strong resonances with Arendt's account of representative thinking as the medium by which imagination is mobilized as a medium for communing with pluralism. The similarity enables us to see that Goodin's idea of reflective democracy is intended to explicitly address the necessity for practices of representation to deliberative practices of democratic inclusion. He suggests that there is no need to think that democracy requires "each person representing his or her own interests, and those exclusively." According to Goodin it is "empirically more realistic, as well as being morally and politically preferable, to think instead of democracy as a process in which we all come to internalize the interests of each other and indeed of the larger world around us."[107]

Goodin's account of reflective democracy is animated by one of the foun-

dational concerns of environmental political thought, namely the question of whether the idea of all affected interests can be extended to include non-human living things and future generations. The same theme is addressed more directly in Robyn Eckersley's discussion of a "democracy of the affected." She extends features of deliberative democracy to environmental concerns by reference to what she calls the "ambit claim." According to this principle, "all those potentially affected by risks should have some meaningful opportunity to participate or otherwise be represented in the making of the policies or decisions which generate such risks."[108] The central theme in Eckersley's model is the idea of communities of fate, that is, the idea that communities of the affected are formed through a shared potential to be harmed by proposed decisions. She shifts attention away from a simple causal model of affectedness and in so doing introduces a further element of indeterminacy and uncertainty into the contingencies associated with the deliberative model.

For Eckersley, opportunities to participate or "otherwise be represented" in risk-generating decisions "should literally be extended to all those affected, irrespective of social class, geographic location, nationality, generation, or species." The combination of the emphasis on the dynamics of risk with an acknowledgement of the place of representation in deliberative processes leads her to recommend a move from thinking in terms of democracy-of-the-affected toward a more assertive idea of democracy-for-the-affected.[109] This latter idea loosens the strong sense of reciprocity found in other deliberative models of democracy, not least in recognition of unequal power relations that are too easily overlooked by rosier versions of the deliberative theory. As with Goodin, Eckersley's revision of deliberative reasoning requires representative thinking on behalf of non-human others as well as differentially situated other humans.

Both Goodin's account of reflective democracy and Eckersley's account of democracy for the affected use the consideration of potentially affected nonhuman interests to draw out essential features of *any* form of democratic deliberative reasoning. The same supplementary significance can be ascribed to other strands of argument concerned with conceptualizing non-human agency. For example, Noortje Marres argues that political matters are not objectively public but have to be actively assembled into issues of public concern. She argues that forming communities of affected interest around public issues requires the mobilization of imagination and capacities for identification. Marres proposes that conceptualizations of democratic publics should therefore be focused on what she calls "issue-affectedness."[110] In a similar spirit, Bruno Latour outlines a program for "the natural history of issues."[111] In his version of ontological politics, Latour identifies no fewer than five different meanings of the word "political": the production of new associations of humans and non-humans; the generation of issues and problems; the turning of problems into governable fields under the sway of sovereign authorities; the deliberative engagement with problems; and the daily

routines of administration and management. Latour's claim is that his own model of "cosmopolitics" actually encompasses all these meanings and throws light on the complexities through which issues emerge as matters of concern that demand collective responses.

While often associated with strong ontological claims about the agency of matter, non-humans, objects, and things, the line of argument developed by Marres and Latour on issue-formation also, and perhaps more significantly, foregrounds the ways in which normative values are folded into broader configurations of practice.[112] This strand of neopragmatism draws into view the dependence of democratic publics on the cultivation of the capacity of "learning to be affected."[113] The formulation "learning to be affected" allows Latour to avoid mind/body dualisms in thinking about the processes of public formation. It situates affectedness within a process of being moved to action by other bodies, and it directs us toward thinking of political agency in terms of capacities to be moved, including dispositions to think, feel, and imagine.

Taken together, these strands of ecological thinking show us the importance of not reducing the idea of affectedness to a causal account of objectively determinable interests or consequences. They also accentuate the shift already identified in Habermas's work from a strong sense of objective interests and toward understanding the dynamics of being moved to act. The shared pragmatist influence across these very different theoretical frameworks opens up the possibility of further loosening the objectivist restrictions on the idea of affectedness and developing an account of the politics of affectedness. In such an account, affectedness would no longer be either causally determined or theoretically adjudicated. It would instead be understood as enacted and performed through practices of articulation, identification, and composition.[114]

Latour provides the clearest formulation of such a politics of affectedness.[115] He specifically addresses the challenge of thinking about the role of scientific knowledge and expertise in forming democratic collectives.[116] His account also addresses the challenge of making space for non-humans in political thought and practice. But Latour's version of ontological politics is distinctive because he does not simply assert that all non-human objects should be ascribed political agency, on the grounds that they play some causal role in generating issues or events.[117] He differentiates the principles of judgment that define what is true and false in various fields of practice, a project oriented by a normative concern with elaborating on the relationships of commitment, responsibility, and representation that distinguish fields from one another and make possible relationships between them.[118]

In light of these concerns, Latour develops an expansive political vision that recasts democracy as a variable practice based on two types of representative power: "the power to take into account" and "the power to put in order." According to Latour, these are the means of "composing the collective" of humans and non-humans. The power to take into account is Latour's variation on the

classical "boundary problem" with which the idea of all affected interests is often associated. It addresses the question "How many are we?" It involves a moment of opening out, in Latour's terms, and of being attuned to the complexity of situations by ensuring that principles of maximal consultation are adhered to. The power to put in order, on the other hand, revolves around the question "Can we live together?" It responds to the imperative of ordering and institutionalizing.[119]

In the last instance, Latour falls back on the genre conventions associated with ontological interpretations of the political, invoking the necessity of both the imperative of opening up and the imperative of ordering. But despite this, his account of "bicameralism," as he calls it, does place a premium on the importance of expressing and responding to demands. For Latour, the distinctive political contribution of environmental movements has been to draw into focus the centrality of representation to democratic politics. He presents this in terms of the articulation of a series of "propositions," that is, claims made on behalf of people, things, plants, and animals that are then taken up and tested, challenged, affirmed, or revised.[120] Latour's interpretation of politics, in short, emphasizes claims-making as the medium in which affectedness becomes an issue of contestation, rather than simply a principle used to settle disputes.

This line of self-defined materialist thought shows that, while the idea of all-affectedness might not be able to *settle* questions of the limits of the demos, it is not thus fated to remain only a secondary factor in accounts of democratic politics. Latour's treatment of affectedness foregrounds claims-making in the enactment of democratic politics and in turn emphasizes the inherently contested nature of such claims. The significant ontological lesson of this strand of work, if there is one to be found, is not the status of non-humans as agents or the assertion of materiality over the humanistic assumptions of social theory. It lies instead in its thinking of democracy in terms of the enactment and processing of claims of inclusion, claims generated by situations in which specific issues arise as matters of shared concern for distributed communities of fate.

I have argued that various strands of ecological and environmental political thought demonstrate that deliberative approaches to democracy contain a supplementary logic that foregrounds issues of representation as claims-making. This emphasis can support an inquiry into democracy as the contestatory enactment of claims against injustice.[121] In these strands of thought, the subjects of democratic politics are redefined, appearing now as representative agents of a variety of sorts rather than simply individuals bound together in relations of intersubjectivity. This redefinition is most clearly evident in the work of John Dryzek, who develops insights from the analysis of environmental politics and other fields of social movement mobilization into a strongly contestatory model of what he calls discursive democracy. In so doing he explicitly recenters deliberative theories of democracy around representative practices of claims-making.

Dryzek's theory of discursive democracy rests on his distinction between thinking in terms of models of democracy and thinking in terms of processes of democratization.[122] He suggests that democratization is a process that unfolds along three distinct but related paths: expansion of the democratic *franchise* (through struggles for more effective inclusion), extension of the *scope* of democracy (to address a wider range of issues), and enhancement of the *authenticity* of democratic control (through more open communication).[123] For Dryzek, the key challenge facing democratic theorists is to address the potential for existing authority and governance mechanisms to be democratized along these three dimensions.

As with other thinkers considered in part 3 of this book, Dryzek uses an account of transnational democracy to disaggregate and clarify the relationships between different aspects of democratic agency. In his case it is the relationship between social movements, claims of affectedness, and representative agency that is disclosed by the emergence of transnational political processes. Dryzek's account of transnational democracy invests heavily in a specific account of the discursive integration of fields of political action. He argues that the systems of global capitalism and international governance are integrated and steered by a variety of discourses with causal power, including discourses of human rights, market liberalism, sustainable development, and the rules of war. In turn, Dryzek argues that any potential for transnational democratization therefore lies in the contestatory energies of social movements rather than in the search for new institutional configurations. This argument follows from his assertion that "discourses cannot be governed, but they can be engaged."[124] In Dryzek's view, opportunities for political agency are distributed across networks of discourses. Accordingly, he presents social movements as collective actors engaged in discursive contestation and only loosely engaged with sites of authoritative, binding decision making.

We have already seen that one feature of deliberative theories of democracy is a shift away from strong models of legitimacy embodying the unified will of a demos and toward an emphasis on the critical force of practices of claims-making. The key contribution of Dryzek's refashioning of deliberative democracy as discursive democracy is his argument that the primary criterion of democratic inclusion is the effective representation of discourses rather than persons.[125] This argument rests on the claim about the discursive integration of systems of international and global power as well as a principle of economy, according to which it is practically impossible to organize all those affected into a coherent deliberative forum.[126]

In this understanding of the integration of complex systems, democracy is thought of in terms of the representation of discursive repertoires, not just people and their opinions. And so transnational democracy appears as the exemplary case of a discursive understanding of the contestatory force of representative claims:

> Representing discourses in transnational political action is actually more straightforward than representing persons or groups. Indeed, it is already happening. In recent years, even economistic global institutions such as the World Bank and (begrudgingly) the International Monetary Fund have begun a program of outreach to global civil society, meaning accountability no longer runs strictly to states. Who elects the NGOs? Nobody. Is there an identifiable constituency or category of people with which each NGO is associated, and to which it is accountable? Not usually. NGOs pushing for human rights, fair trade, sustainable development, demilitarization, transparency, and so forth, may best be thought of as representatives of particular discourses in international politics. Is the world any more democratic for their activities? Clearly yes: the international governmental institutions they target now have to justify their activities in light of a variety of discourses, whereas previously they either felt no need to justify at all, or did so in narrowly economistic and administrative terms.[127]

This vision of the democratization of transnational practices reflects a strong commitment to the view that any attempt to reconcile a theory of democracy with the designs of state institutions or the imperatives of law is an unwelcome compromise of the *critical* impulses of critical theory. The normative claim about democratic legitimacy that follows from Dryzek's shift of political agency away from a deliberative subject to a process of representation is, therefore, significantly weaker even than that found in other strands of critical theory: "Democratic legitimacy is to be found in the degree to which collective decisions are consistent with the constellation of discourses existing within the public sphere, in the degree to which this balance is itself under the decentralized control of reflective, competent, and informed actors."[128] Yet this vision provides a stronger sense of the contestatory energies of democratic politics than do the views of other thinkers in the deliberative tradition.

We have now reached the point where the all affected principle, which is so central to the deliberative turn in critical theories of democracy, has moved from a realm of intersubjective communication to a realm of discursive representation. By making explicit the problematic relationship between highly participatory norms of deliberation and the practicalities of more attenuated styles of engagement, Dryzek's elaboration of a theory of discursive democracy, much like Latour's account of the ontological politics of democracy, decisively reorders the assumptions about the types of political agency through which the dynamic of democratization is generated. By presenting transnational politics as the exemplary scene of discursive democracy, Dryzek effectively displaces the question of whether the inclusive ethics of deliberative theories of democracy can be squared with equally compelling imperatives to extend the all affected principle to include non-human interests. He does so by proposing an analysis of *how* new forms of

democratic control are enacted and new forms of legitimacy are demanded and contested through representative claims of various forms.[129]

Situating the Claims of Democracy

This chapter has traced the revival and transformation of the principle of all affected interests in critical theories of democracy. We have seen that the most obvious implication of the application of the all affected idea is to extend the spatial scope of democratic universalism beyond the boundaries of nation-states, within which it has been conceptually contained. It is common enough to argue that we need to respatialize the democratic imagination to match the scope of interactions in a globalized world.[130] Such an argument rests on the suggestion that current arrangements exclude some affected persons from decisions or that they include those who should not be empowered. The all affected idea is often invoked in this way, as if it were a straightforward, coherent causal principle for objectively redistricting the global polity. I have suggested that these calls should be seen as expressions of an often-unacknowledged methodological globalism.

We should pause to consider more carefully the full implications of making the all affected principle central to democratic theory. In critical theories of deliberative democracy, the all affected principle of democratic inclusion is translated into a deliberative norm via Habermas's discourse ethics and theory of communicative action. Seyla Benhabib's critical revision of Habermas's account draws into view new dimensions of the idea of affectedness. And they are further elaborated in the work of materialist theorists who emphasize the centrality of practices of learning to be affected, as well as by thinkers concerned with democracy and environmental politics. Across the fields of critical theory discussed in this chapter, a recurring theme is the idea of thinking of representation as a practice of claims-making, or "as a thing that is done."[131]

Across these conceptual elaborations, the all affected idea emerges as a critical norm of inclusive communicative action. I have traced the move away from a strongly causal interpretation of the idea of all-affectedness to an emphasis on the variable formation of communities of the affected through processes of imagination and discursive representation. I also have shown how the notion of affectedness can itself be disaggregated into three distinct aspects—*having an interest*, *taking an interest*, and *affecting*. These analytical distinctions follow from thinking of affectedness as a product of communicative interaction rather than as an objectively causal phenomenon.

Crucially, in this process of translation and disaggregation the interpretation of the all affected idea shifts away from a strongly legislative emphasis to a more heuristic inflection. Attention should now be focused on how affectedness is used

as a register for articulating and contesting representative claims. This does not imply a purely scholarly pursuit. The tradition of critical theory I have drawn on in this chapter puts a premium on the pragmatist claim that democratic legitimacy is derived from the epistemic function that discourse, negotiation, and mediums of publicity play in identifying relevant problems, informing citizens, and communicating to centers of authoritative decision making. Affectedness—understood as a combination of taking an interest and having an interest but also as a mode of affecting—emerges from this ongoing process of problematization.[132] In this respect, the reconfiguration of the all affected idea is central to the commitment to experimenting with alternative mechanisms of institutional design that is a feature of deliberative theories of democracy.[133]

Earlier in this chapter I suggested that one implication of Habermas's translation of the idea of all-affectedness into the terms of his theory of communicative action is to recast our understanding of the geographies of democratic politics. The chapter began by showing how political theorists use figures of globalization to disaggregate key concepts of democratic theory. They do so, however, within a broad frame of reference, which I dub methodological globalism. From this perspective, it is presumed that reconceptualizing democracy around norms of inclusive deliberation necessarily implies the spatial extension of political action beyond the scales within which it has hitherto been conceptually and normatively enclosed. The communicative reconstruction of the all affected principle might, in theory, extend the scope of any potential demos beyond territorial limits. But the conceptual transformation of affectedness should not be interpreted as a straightforward warrant for a type of methodological globalism that believes that the emplaced contexts of social integration—cities, nations, places—have lost their empirical significance or normative legitimacy as sites of democratizing energy. In fact, I want to close this chapter by affirming that the conceptual transformation of affectedness actually requires a heightened concern for the situated contexts of social integration through which communicative capacities are worked-up. This affirmation follows, first, from the fact that it is communicative practices of dialogue, learning, reasoning, and recognition that are made central to the formation of affected communities in recent critical theories of democracy. Second, post-Habermasian theories of democratic politics, with their strongly pragmatist inflection, also view situated contexts of interaction as crucial focal points around which a sense of the shared salience of issues is generated.

In both respects—in the emphasis on the centrality of communicative mediums of interaction and in the emphasis on the problematic situations around which affectedness is formed—the transformation of the idea of all-affectedness into a norm of democratic judgment requires an appreciation of what Habermas would call the "lifeworld." Lifeworld is Habermas's name for the background of shared meanings, institutional orders, and personality structures in which subjectivities are formed and nurtured.[134] More formally, lifeworld is the name for the

"context-forming horizons of social action" that facilitate communicative action oriented to understanding, providing the basis for being able to deal with and define situations.[135] In the terms used previously in this chapter, it is in lifeworlds that dispositions toward "learning to be affected" are worked up and reproduced.

My claim is that the methodological globalism that characterizes theories of cosmopolitanism, global justice, or transnational democracy requires as a kind of necessary supplement a heightened sensitivity to the situated contexts in which the discursive and affective competencies required by these theories are worked up in the first place. For both Habermas and Benhabib, the deliberative mediation of affectedness necessarily takes place with reference to shared traditions and through situated encounters with others. Herein lies the significance of the disqualification of monological styles of reasoning in critical theories of democracy. Insofar as the spatial extension of democracy imagined in these theories depends on the theoretical transformation of norms of universalization into the vocabulary of communicatively mediated affectedness, then the emphasis given to contestatory processes of claims-making in critical theories of democracy requires also an analysis of the necessarily partial contexts in which capacities to develop solidaristic identifications and to affectively acknowledge and act on the claims of others are cultivated and learned.

I affirm the importance of the situated emergence of communicatively mediated affectedness in order to draw into view the degree to which the more "transcendent" dispositions presumed necessary for cultivating cosmopolitan, global, or transnational action always depend on infrastructures of socialization and social reproduction. This is a relationship that methodologically globalist theories of democracy often have difficulty acknowledging. The issue is made explicit in Benhabib's account of the apparent paradox of democratic legitimacy exposed by the politics of transnational migration, in which the spread of universal principles of human rights appears to contradict the boundedness of democratic communities.[136] Arguing against the presupposition that the imperatives of human rights necessarily trump national claims of territorial sovereignty over membership, Benhabib asserts that democracy requires borders in order for the norm of all those affected by a course of action having a say in its adoption to have any practical meaning. Her claim is that a degree of closure of the demos is necessary not for empirical reasons or on ontological grounds but on normative grounds. Democratic practice must, Benhabib asserts, be "accountable to a specific people."[137] This claim follows from her earlier account of the necessary dialogical mediation of universal principles through switching perspectives between generalized and concrete others.

On the principle that universal norms must be appropriated dialogically through concrete communities of deliberation, Benhabib proposes a model of "democratic iteration," or "a series of interlocking conversations and interactions" through which context-transcending norms of universal human rights are appro-

priated and subjected to scrutiny by concrete associations of people.[138] The sense of "iteration" in this account of the situated appropriation and transformation of universal norms indicates that "closure" does not have the same connotation for Benhabib as it does in poststructuralist theories of radical democracy. It implies an active to-and-fro between situated communities and universal imperatives. But more than that, the theme of democratic iteration also points toward a sociologically thicker understanding of the qualities of political communities than that provided by a vocabulary of citizens and foreigners, nationals and aliens. It is a view, in short, that presumes that partial, situated practices of solidarity are the very condition for more expansive forms of political identification.

Following Benhabib's lead, I submit that methodological globalism causes critical theorists of deliberative democracy to persistently underestimate not just the resilience of territorialized forms of organization and culture but also their normative and conceptual significance for understanding the geographies of democratic politics. I endorse Craig Calhoun's claim that such approaches have often displayed a "blindness toward the sociological conditions for cosmopolitanism itself and toward the reasons why national, ethnic, and other groups remain important to most of the world's people."[139] The point is not that nation-states are the only available or necessary structures of social integration. But they are in important respects quite good models for such processes and continue in practice to perform important integrative functions.[140] Alongside other fields of practice embedded in family life, in religious networks, in neighborhoods and cities, nations and nation-states can provide crucial resources for integrative lifeworld functions on which affectively rich communicative action relies—resources that are not merely "ideological" or even "cultural" but that extend to "educational systems, health care systems, and transportation systems."[141]

Benhabib and Calhoun help us see the continuing salience of spatially embedded cultural formations and institutional systems that provide resources for solidarity and integration and on which the capacities to imaginatively identify with and practically engage in the politics of humanitarian concern, international solidarity, cosmopolitan rights, or global justice depend. These situated contexts in which capacities to "learn to be affected" are worked up need not necessarily be territorialized, but it is reasonable to suppose that they do often remain in important ways *emplaced* in infrastructures and practices of national culture, rhythms of urban living, and locally configured practices of everyday life. In short, if the communicative reconstruction of the idea of all-affectedness leads to a contestatory emphasis on claims-making as the medium of democratic politics, then this requires us to take seriously not only the deterritorializing effects of globalized chains of cause and consequence but also the geographies in which dispositions to affectively acknowledge the claims of others are learned and capacities to act on these claims are embedded.

We have arrived, then, at the idea of thinking about the all affected principle

as a medium for contestatory demands. This view should lead us to adjust our imaginations of the geographies of democratization. And I have suggested that the translation of the norm of all affected interests into a register of claims-making also requires further attention to the variable genres of reasoning through which communities of the affected are assembled. But we need to move on to refine more precisely the specific form of "wrong" that is expressed in modes of democratic claims-making in the register of affectedness. I turn to this issue in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

Subjects of Domination

> For justice, in its core, regardless of the specific focus we choose, distributional or other, always demands an order of social relations *free from arbitrary rule* of some over others. Justice, I want to argue, is not primarily about evaluating end-states or distributions of goods regardless of how they came about; justice is a relational virtue of the actions, structures and institutions in which persons stand to each other as social and political subjects, be they structures of the production and distribution of material goods or of the exercise of political power. Otherwise, we would not be able to distinguish between a situation of persons being in grave material need because they are victims of a natural catastrophe and a situation of grave need because persons are subject to injustice in the form of exploitation.
>
> **—Rainer Forst**

In the previous chapter, I argued that debates about cosmopolitanism, environmental issues, global poverty, and transnational migration have helped to draw into view the norm of all-affectedness as the central reference point for thinking about democratic legitimacy. It is easy enough to think that the principle of all affected interests exhausts the question of *who* should constitute the democratic polity. But the principle of affectedness also relates to questions of effective agency, that is, to the capacity to do things. It refers to the *how* of democracy as well the identity of who is affected. The translation of the all affected principle into the idiom of communicative action has two implications for how we think about the powers of democratic action. First, all-affectedness is no longer thought of as a legislative principle of adjudication but rather as a worldly norm around which political action is formed. And second, the embodiment of all-affectedness in organizational or institutional form is inextricably tied to the enactment of various types of representative agency.

Both of these issues raise further questions about how to theorize the influence of the people over common affairs. If people may be affected by patterns of action in various ways, then it is reasonable to suppose that people might in turn seek

to affect those patterns in a variety of ways. The reconfiguration of the idea of all-affectedness therefore draws into view the need to consider different forms of democratic control: popular control can be conceptualized as causal influence (the model here is elections, which turn out to be a disappointing model of democracy in many ways), as intentional direction (although the model of the singular will of the people is both too demanding and normatively problematic), and as a form of institutional control (by tracking preferences and justifiable reasons).[1] These different forms imply different ways of imagining the relationships between influencing and exercising democratic power. Any given mode of democratic politics will likely combine different forms of control in different ways. And of course, any given combination of these forms of control will likely generate patterns of indirect consequence that engender further claims of affectedness—in short, they will potentially generate political evils of their own.

In this chapter I will argue that once we acknowledge the importance of practices of representation and multiple forms of democratic control in the refashioning of the idea of all-affectedness, then we should be able to see that the specific wrong against which claims of affectedness are made that is pertinent to democratic judgment is not exclusion, as is often presumed by critical spatial theorists. Rather, the importance of the all affected idea to democratic theory lies in the sense that some participants in a field of practice may be affected by actions over which they have no control, that is, that they may be arbitrarily subjected to the will of others—subject, that is, to *domination*. As a political principle, the all affected idea presupposes that those affected by an action should be able to exercise some effective agency in order to respond. Questions of power therefore arise around the actions that might generate claims of being affected and also around the legitimacy of the forms of effective agency that develop in response to these claims. In this chapter I trace the revival of the concept of domination as a central reference point for critical theories of democracy. I show how this concept is related to particular geographical themes in contemporary deliberative and pragmatist democratic theory. The thinkers I consider in this chapter present domination as a relationship that is both made more visible and takes on new forms under conditions of "globalization." I will show how this theme in turn involves a specific focus on the idea of freedom as non-domination as the core value of democratic theory.

Domination is, of course, a long-standing theme in critical theory. The concept of domination is central to the self-understanding of critical theory as *critical*. It is, for example, the recurring theme of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which contends that technological domination over nature is mirrored in the rise of political domination.[2] In this tradition of thought, technological domination is expressed in the ascendancy of instrumental reason over other cognitive and affective faculties.[3] More recently, Michael Walzer has argued that "domination" arises from the inappropriate "dominance" of practices,

principles, and resources drawn from one field of activity (the economy, kinship networks, bureaucracy) over activity in other spheres.[4]

The strand of contemporary critical theory that I will explicate in this chapter departs from this inherited conceptualization of domination in important ways. It is concerned less with providing a historical narrative of the integration of domination across technological, social, psychic, and cognitive fields. It is instead concerned with developing an immanent norm of non-domination as the core normative value of a theory of democratic justice.[5] What is most distinctive about this presumption against domination and in favor of non-domination is that it involves a shift away from developing and applying egalitarian ideals of justice and toward theorizing about injustice. It involves, in turn, a shift in the understanding of the vocation of critical theory itself, an implication that I will explore further in chapter 8.

Before considering in more detail the significance of prioritizing injustice in democratic theory, I will pick up on a theme developed in chapter 6. I argued there that the translation of the all affected idea into a norm of communicative participation requires a decisive shift away from the assumption that all-affectedness is first and foremost an objective causal criterion, to be deployed either critically or legislatively. I will consider how geographical tropes are used by critical theorists to develop an understanding of all-affectedness as a political intuition that animates contestatory mobilization. Attending to the spatial grammar of critical theories of democracy suggests that there is more to the practical resonance of ideas of all-affectedness than implicit appeals to values of equal moral worth. These values are invoked against a specific form of wrong, the wrong of domination, which is understood in a specifically political sense as the arbitrary subjection to the will of others.

What Kind of Principle *Is* the Principle of All Affected Interests?

Robert Dahl can help us grasp the full significance of the idea of all-affectedness for a critical theory of democracy. For Dahl, "the principle of affected interests" remains the best available principle for thinking about inclusion in a democratic polity.[6] In response to the question of "who should be entitled to participate in the government of a democratic association?," Dahl argues that no single form of authority captures the essence of democracy.[7] There are necessarily multiple dimensions of democratic politics, combined with other political modes.[8] Dahl proposes that the relevant criterion in using democracy as a norm is the idea that "*the demos should include all adults subject to the binding collective decisions of the association*."[9] This is not a straightforwardly causal definition of the sort we considered in chapter 6. It is a political definition, one that emphasizes the expectations of participation that follow from being bound into relations of obligation.

Dahl observes that the classical formulation of "the boundary problem," around which the all affected principle is formalized in political theory is not simply a problem of inclusion. There are in fact two boundary problems, the problem of inclusion and the problem of the scope of authority of the demos—what I called in the previous chapter being affected and affecting. Dahl is concerned with exploring the relationship between these two problems, that is, the relationship between "who ought to comprise 'the people' and what does it mean for them 'to rule.'"[10] He suggests that the principle of affected interests is relevant to both the aspect of rule and the aspect of the identity of the people: "For by the way in which we define 'the people' we shall automatically determine the way in which they can 'rule'; and by the way in which we define 'rule' we shall necessarily set some bounds on how 'the people' can be constituted."[11] In seeking to negotiate the tension between the issue of inclusion and the issue of rule, Dahl is led to undertake his own disaggregation of the principle of affected interests.

For Dahl, the principle of affected interests is a simple idea that follows from claims such as "no taxation without representation": "Everyone who is affected by the decisions of a government should have the right to participate in that government." This idea, he explains, "is very likely the best principle of inclusion that you are likely to find. Yet it turns out to be a good deal less compelling than it looks." Dahl identifies three problems with the idea of affected interests. First, as we have already discussed, there is the implication that the set of persons affected differs from one decision to another. Dahl takes this as one reason to recommend the idea of multiple units of democratic participation. Second, Dahl points out that "the people affected by a decision are by no means affected equally." We have seen this issue considered in Shapiro's elaboration of the strongly causal interpretation of the all affected idea. And finally, a further complication arises from the fact that "what affects my interests depends on subjective factors." This third issue is the most significant contribution of Dahl's discussion. As he observes, the subjective dimension "enlarges one's interests and hence the possibility of being affected by the decisions of others." This possibility shifts attention away from a strongly causal, objectivist interpretation of interests of the sort I discussed in chapter 6. Dahl does not attempt to contain the implications of this third issue by invoking a clear-cut distinction between having an interest and merely taking an interest. He strongly affirms that the subjective dimension is intrinsic to the all affected idea. And this affirmation is central to how Dahl approaches the dilemma of constituting the demos democratically: "There is no theoretical solution to the problem, but only pragmatic ones."[12]

The acknowledgment of the subjective dimensions of interests makes the idea of all-affectedness much more complex than it at first appeared. But this complexity leads Dahl not to abandon the idea or to contain it but to specify more precisely how it might best be used analytically: "If the Principle of Affected Interests, which at first glance looked as bright and clear as Sirius on a winter's night, has turned

out to be a diffuse galaxy of uncountable possibilities, it is, nonetheless, not such a bad principle to start with." Thinking of the idea of affectedness as a *starting point* for analysis is the crucial lesson to be drawn from Dahl's discussion. In particular, we should take seriously Dahl's argument that the principle of affected interest provides a focal point for claims-making against injustice: "It gives people who believe themselves to be seriously affected by decisions at least a *prima facie* case for participating in those decisions."[13] Appealing to the principle of affected interests puts the burden of justification squarely on those who wish to invoke other criteria against those claims (principles of competency or economy, for example).

Dahl's argument therefore begins to redirect our attention away from the task of making the all affected principle into a robust principle of adjudication and toward investigating how the principle is used as a worldly register of claims-making. His presentation of the principle of affected interests as a good place to start the analysis of the relations between the scope of rule and the identity of the people points toward a revised image of the vocation of critical theories of democratic politics. The suggestion that the principle should be thought of as a resource mobilized by actors involved in political contention reinforces my argument that the conceptual transformation of the all affected idea in post-Habermasian social theory, by loosening the causal interpretation of affectedness, transforms the principle from a monological criterion of adjudication into a performative register through which practices of claims-making enact new spaces of democratic contestation. Once we see affectedness as a worldly norm, the critical task becomes centered on the question of how capacities of being affected, of being moved, are distributed and mobilized in political contention.

The idea of all affected interests, then, should be thought of as a worldly principle. I make this case in order to integrate more fully Shapiro's observation that the concept of opposition is the neglected aspect of theories of democratic justice. It is also the aspect of his own account of affected interests that is least well developed. But his insistence on thinking of affectedness in terms of relationships of power, once freed from the overly objectivist interpretation he retains, suggests that we should not think of all-affectedness as a norm with which to determine the decisions, interests, and influence of the demos. It is more productive to pursue the suggestion that the all affected principle emerges as a medium of democratic opposition. And if we approach the all affected idea as a worldly principle, then we should perhaps also approach academic treatments of the affected interests principle and the boundary problem as formalizations of modes of judgment and justification through which social worlds are actually coordinated and against the background of which features of those worlds become problematic objects of dispute.[14]

The shift to understanding all-affectedness as a worldly register of claims-making, anticipated by Dahl in the early 1970s, has been most fully developed in recent strands of critical theory that focus on the contestatory energies of movement politics. These strands of thought combine aspects of Habermas's theory

of communicative action with insights from pragmatism, feminist theory, and republican theories of freedom and self-determination. One finds here an understanding of political action as enacted by social movements, advocacy coalitions, activists, and NGOs.[15] Eschewing the temptation of satisfying the ontological need, theorists working in the vein of post-Habermasian critical theory tend to conceptualize democracy by reference to fallible empirical claims informed by contemporary social theory. The rest of this chapter elucidates further on this tradition of critical theory. We will see that democracy appears in this strand of thought as a risky means of mitigating the specifically political wrongs associated with domination, a form of harm that is conceptualized as particularly acute in a globalized world. The significance of the all affected idea for democratic theory lies here, in foregrounding the analytical and normative significance of claims against injustice arising from the arbitrary exercise of power, or domination.

Frames of Justice

My starting point in reconstructing the central importance of the idea of all-affectedness in the development of a critical theory of injustice is a consideration of Nancy Fraser's account of democratic justice. Fraser makes use of and in turn challenges the adequacy of the principle of all affected interests and suggests an important revision that focuses attention on issues of domination in democratic theory. Fraser has refined her feminist-informed critique of Habermas's original formulation of the public sphere concept into an argument concerning the multiple sources of injustice to which an emancipatory critical theory should respond.[16] From debates in the 1990s with other feminist theorists such as Judith Butler and Iris Marion Young through to her dialogical engagement with Axel Honneth, Fraser consistently argues that there are two dimensions of injustice—one economic, one cultural. Defending an approach to theorizing justice based on "perspectival dualism," she argues that a "politics of redistribution" is analytically distinct from a "politics of recognition." In revising her thought, Fraser has come to argue that these two aspects are conceptually equivalent to class hierarchies and status orders. More recently, Fraser has added a third strand to her understanding of justice, an explicitly political strand focused on the "politics of representation" that is implicated in the politics of both redistribution and recognition.[17] The politics of representation, in Fraser's formulation, revolves around processes of "framing." Framing, for Fraser, is the "deep grammar" of politics, the mechanism that determines what is considered a matter of justice, who are its subjects, and which actors are agents of redress or resolution.

The introduction of the third aspect of political representation is the occasion for the explicit spatialization of Fraser's account of justice. As with other thinkers working through the tradition of critical theory, Fraser uses globalization and the

associated decline of the "Keynesian-Westphalian" order to pry open key concepts of democratic theory. She argues that these processes bring into view the analytical and normative problem of "framing." The problem of framing is concerned with determining which jurisdiction and which criteria are appropriate ones through which claims of justice should be processed. For Fraser, the question of the frame is central to any and all issues of social justice. We can see in this refinement another version of what, in chapter 3, I referred to as a heuristic use of the distinction between politics and the political. In this case, the theme of framing leads Fraser to distinguish between two distinct sources of injustice: "ordinary-political injustices" characteristic of political life within the confines of territorial state and "meta-political injustices," where the conditions in which the former are contested themselves become objects of dispute.[18]

In Fraser's view, spatial arrangements of power are central to the metapolitical framing of questions of democracy and justice. One of her reference points in elaborating on the importance of framing to the project of theorizing justice is the account of global egalitarian justice developed by Thomas Pogge. For him, the habit of addressing issues of justice from within a national frame is itself a fundamental source of injustice in the world. Pogge argues that in an integrated global economy the system of nation-states effectively disempowers the poor by containing their political claims within states that are effectively powerless over economic and political actors beyond their jurisdiction.[19] For Fraser, the lesson to be drawn from Pogge's work is that the Westphalian frame "gerrymanders political space at the expense of the poor and despised."[20] And in this sense, the national frame of justice appears as itself a source of significant injustice.

"Abnormal justice" is the name Fraser gives to the situation provoked by globalization, in which first-order justice claims—claims of redistribution, recognition, and representation—have become detached from their existing, nationally defined frames:

> This is the case for each of three major families of justice claims: claims for socioeconomic redistribution, claims for legal or cultural recognition, and claims for political representation. Thus, in the wake of transnationalized production, globalized finance, and neoliberal trade and investment regimes, redistribution claims increasingly trespass the bounds of state-centered grammars and arenas of argument. Likewise, given transnational migration and global media flows, the claims for recognition of once distant "others" acquire a new proximity, destabilizing horizons of cultural value that were previously taken for granted. Finally, in an era of contested superpower hegemony, global governance, and transnational politics, claims for representation increasingly break the previous frame of the modern territorial state.[21]

Fraser's argument here starts from the observation that questions of justice are normally defined with reference to the nation-state. The citizens of nation-states

are assumed to be the subjects of social justice claims and the agencies of the nation-state to be the addressees of such claims. For Fraser, globalization generates a situation of abnormal justice by unsettling assumptions about what the object of justice claims is, who is entitled to address such claims, where and how those claims should be assessed, and who is obliged to respond to them. All of these issues of framing thus become the explicit focus of dispute and contestation. Fraser argues that situations of abnormal justice are made visible through the agency of social movements that have developed a "new grammar of claims-making" in which the focus of attention is on how first-order claims should be framed. In this account, social movements operating in transnational political space are key agents in making claims against the misframing of justice claims, thereby generating a politics in which the territorialization of justice in the Westphalian frame is itself an object of contention.

Fraser's claim about the agency of social movements highlights two important methodological protocols of her reconstruction of critical theory around the idea of abnormal justice. Both aspects follow from the guiding imperative of classical critical theory: "to locate normative standards and emancipatory political possibilities precisely within the historically unfolding constellation."[22] First, she argues that her conceptual elaborations track broader shifts in practices of political activism. Her claim is that contemporary global justice activism problematizes the exclusively national-territorial framing of questions of justice as itself a potential source of injustice. The national framing disempowers some affected parties from participation in decisions that impact them and deny them recourse to effective avenues of accountability and redress. Second, and related to this, Fraser uses the social fact of globalization to specify fine-grained analytical distinctions in key normative concepts of democratic theory.

Following these two protocols, Fraser disaggregates the central idea of a critical theory of democracy, the concept of the public sphere, into a series of more precisely defined analytical distinctions. Globalization, she suggests, challenges the empirical assumptions on which Habermas based the normative claim made on behalf of public opinion in his critical theory of democracy. Fraser argues that Habermas's original account of a critical theory of the democratic public sphere combines two dimensions of evaluation: an emphasis on the normative legitimacy of public opinion and an emphasis on the political efficacy of public opinion. In her account, global processes have disrupted the settled conceptualizations of the spaces in which criteria of both normative legitimacy and political efficacy are applied. According to Fraser, it has become difficult to maintain the assumption that the demos in which questions of legitimacy are settled is or should be equivalent to a national public. And it also has become difficult to maintain that the sole agent of legitimate will formation and decision making is or should be the nation-state and its surrogates.

The distinction between legitimacy and efficacy and the question of their rela-

tionship form the centerpiece of Fraser's conceptualization of the democratic potential of transnational public spheres. Having introduced the distinction between legitimacy and efficacy of public opinion, Fraser moves on to further disaggregate and reconstruct the relations between different component parts of each concept. First she argues that the principle of legitimacy in public sphere theory, which rests on the value of inclusiveness and participatory parity, conflates two analytically distinct issues: membership and affectedness. For Fraser, "globalization is driving a widening wedge between affectedness and political membership." In her view, in a globalized world, the principle of affectedness has priority over membership as a criterion of democratic inclusion. This claim follows from observable patterns of transnational political activism. In Fraser's account, global justice activists are "appealing directly to the all-affected principle in order to circumvent the state-territorial partitioning of political space." They do so, she argues, by engaging in a contestatory politics of representation that seeks to reframe the spatial scales at which the subjects, objects, and agents of justice claims are assembled into effective patterns of action. Fraser develops this understanding of the worldliness of the affected principle into a new and rather stringent principle that has to be met by transnational mobilizations to satisfy democratic norms: "Henceforth, public opinion is legitimate if and only if it results from a communicative process in which all potentially affected can participate as peers, *regardless of political citizenship*."[23]

In presenting a revised principle of critical evaluation that withholds automatic affirmation of expressions of activist commitment and energy, Fraser is making use of and revising her own principle of "participatory parity" as the norm upon which to anchor a reconfiguration of critical theories of democratic justice. Participatory parity refers to the simple idea that "justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as *peers*."[24] This simple-sounding idea has significant implications for how we think of the tasks of critical theory. Fraser suggests that the principle is "a powerful justificatory standard" but also that "it cannot be applied monologically, in the manner of a decision procedure."[25] In one sense, this argument is similar to one made by Habermas and Benhabib and discussed in chapter 6. But Fraser makes a stronger case for thinking about the idea of participatory parity as an idiom of public reason through which debates about contestation and justice are pursued. In making her case, she seeks to avoid two assumptions often made about the tasks of critical theory. The first is that a special kind of philosophical expertise is required to decide on questions of justice. The second is that those who are most disadvantaged or marginalized should determine whether and how they suffer from injustice. Fraser suggests that both suppositions are actually forms of monological reasoning, insofar as they involve "vesting in a single subject the authority to interpret the requirements of justice." The task of critical theory, for Fraser, is to avoid the "authoritarian usurpation and self-effacing vacuity" associated with these two positions, respectively.[26]

Having disaggregated the principle of legitimacy, in a second conceptual move Fraser argues that globalization also requires us to distinguish two aspects of the efficacy principle. In this case, the relevant analytical distinction is between the translation of public opinion into concerted action and the institutional capacity to act on the direction given by public opinion. In classical public sphere theory, the medium for the translation of public opinion is binding laws. And it is assumed that the capacity criterion has been met by the administrative capabilities of the sovereign state to transform public opinion into efficacious public action. Fraser does not actually have much to say about how globalization transforms our assumptions about the translation conditions of the public sphere. This issue does remain central to Habermas's consideration of the constitutionalization of international law. However, neither Fraser nor Habermas considers in detail whether there might be weaker forms of translation other than law that are articulated by transnational publics.

Fraser herself holds that the primary challenge globalization presents to democracy is the question of whether the nation-state still has the capacity to steer its economy. As with other critical theorists, Fraser holds to an "externalist" account of globalization in raising the question of which agents now have the capacity to act effectively in response to the will of transnational publics to rein in global processes of accumulation. In her revised model of the public sphere, Fraser insists that any legitimately generated transnational network of public opinion must be matched by the creation of new "transnational public powers," with the capacity both to act and to be held accountable. Her argument is therefore that transnational democracy necessarily requires more than just an expanded scope of contestation. It also requires new transnational regulatory, policing, and legal powers as well as transnational mechanisms of accountability. Fraser's argument here is premised on another example of conceptual disaggregation. She identifies a divergence between different aspects of justice. On the one hand, the politics of framing expands the field in which injustice is contested. But on its own, contestation is not an adequate response to injustice: "The problem is that expanded contestation cannot by itself overcome injustice. Overcoming injustice requires at least two additional conditions: first, a relatively stable framework in which claims can be equitably vetted and, second, institutionalized agencies and means of redress." Fraser argues that neither of the latter two conditions for establishing justice is met in the current conjuncture of abnormal justice, one that is characterized by expanded contestation on the one hand and "reduced means for corroborating and redressing injustice" on the other.[27]

The argument that transnational public opinion must be matched by effective transnational capacity follows from the idea that justice *has to be done*. In his reconstruction of a critical theory of transitional democracy, James Bohman makes much the same point, arguing, "Contestation is not what the dominated require."[28] But between these two thinkers there is a significant difference of emphasis. The

strong presupposition of Fraser's argument is that the putative legitimacy of transnational politics depends on a parallel development of transnational authority structures to which such agents can address their claims. Fraser acknowledges that the two aspects of democratic publics, legitimacy and efficacy, were never actually perfectly aligned, but she claims that now the gap between them is particularly wide and deep. One might suppose that the lack of exact isomorphism before globalization is a good reason to suspect that the normative assumption in the original theory of the public sphere—that legitimacy and efficacy need to be territorially aligned—is actually conceptually and normatively problematic and not just empirically defunct in the twenty-first century. If public spheres have always been geographically messy assemblages of national and transnational practices, then there is no reason to suppose that equally messy contemporary configurations of local, national, and transnational politics might not in principle be able to approach criteria of democratic legitimacy and/or efficacy. As we will see, Bohman provides just such an alternative inflection to critical theory, one that does not presume that different fields of action have to be territorially aligned, nor indeed that they even have the same shape in the first place. But in order to appreciate the grounds for this difference of emphasis, we need to first attend more closely to the specific injury that both Fraser and Bohman presume to be at stake in discussions of democratic justice: the wrong of domination.

From All Affected to All Subjected

Fraser's idea of frames of justice brings into view the implicit spatialization of key concepts of democratic theory. This is most evident in her claim that the idea of affectedness is used nowadays in political practice to frame questions of justice "without going through the detour of state-territoriality." Fraser argues that activists are applying the all affected principle directly in framing justice claims. In so doing, she continues, contemporary activism challenges the established "grammar of frame-setting": "Contesting their exclusion by the Keynesian-Westphalian frame, environmentalists and indigenous peoples are claiming standing as subjects of justice in relation to extra- and non-territorial powers that impinge on their lives."[29] We see here how the use of a specific spatial grammar allows Fraser to transform the very sense of all-affectedness. Fraser's strong claim is that democratic criteria should be thought of not just as intuitive ideas implicit in practice but also as worldly mediums for explicit political contestation and mobilization.

The initial consideration of transnational public spheres in Fraser's account of the scales of justice gave considerable weight to the idea of all affected interests. Her treatment of the all affected principle has been shaped by her insistence that the problem identified by the principle is not subject to a purely philosophical resolution. To presume that it is would be to reproduce a monological form of

reasoning in democratic theory. She argues that philosophical interpretations of the all affected principle, as well as empirical social science accounts of how consequences of action are distributed, should be seen as part of a broader public debate: "In general, the all-affected principle must be interpreted dialogically, through the give-and-take of argument in democratic deliberation."[30] In this dialogical formulation of the all affected principle, Fraser is not just intent on extending the scope of democratic legitimacy beyond the confines of the nation-state. She is relocating legitimacy within a different conceptual register. We have seen the same move in Habermas's discourse ethics and in Benhabib's critical revision of his account of democratic legitimacy. As with those thinkers, Fraser's conceptual relocation of legitimacy transforms the meaning of the all affected idea from an objective criterion into a communicative-affective problem of identification, recognition, and capacity.

In Fraser's further specification of the theme of abnormal justice, however, her treatment of the idea of all-affectedness undergoes an important revision.[31] We have seen that she rejects both the principle of membership and a moralistic humanism as appropriate criteria with which to evaluate the framing of justice. And having initially recommended the all affected principle as a way of developing an adequate alternative, Fraser moves on to reject the principle. She does so on the grounds that it evaluates the legitimacy of frames by tracking the collective entanglement in causal relationships. Fraser's objection to this interpretation of the all affected principle is twofold. First, she suggests that "by conceiving relations objectivistically, in terms of causality, it effectively relegates the choice of the 'who' to mainstream social science." This is to succumb to the temptation to determine all-affectedness monologically. Second, she argues that the principle "falls prey to the *reductio absurdum* of the butterfly effect, which holds that everyone is affected by everything." We have already seen other variations of these same objections. But Fraser provides a strongly political response to both problems and in doing so begins to specify the central concern of a critical theory of democracy. In her view, a public of the affected is formed not simply by entanglement in structures of causal interdependence, by national identity, or by status as a human person. What turns people into "fellow subjects of justice," according to Fraser, is "their joint subjection to a structure of governance, which sets the ground rules that govern their interaction." On these grounds, and in place of the earlier argument that the all affected principle should be applied directly, Fraser now recommends what she calls the principle of "all-subjected" as a criterion of democratic evaluation. According to this norm "all those who are subject to a given governance structure have moral standing as subjects of justice in relation to it."[32] The "all-subjected" norm requires an expansive concept of a structure of governance, one that extends beyond formal institutions to include entrainment in market processes. Fraser presents the idea of all-subjected as a determinate principle that can be applied to the evaluation of processes of political framing. In her account, it is an idea that

valorizes the expanded contestation of frames while also addressing the two imperatives that follow from the idea that justice has to be done: those claims need to be found to be warranted, and binding decisions based on them need be put into practice.

The all-subjected norm does not necessarily avoid the problems of regress, indeterminacy, and incoherence that Fraser and others ascribe to the all affected interests principle. In important respects, Fraser's all-subjected norm might actually be more restrictive than all-affectedness as used by thinkers such as Thomas Pogge or Iris Marion Young, against which she proposes it as a preferable alternative. Fraser's concern with aligning issues of legitimacy and efficacy and with reconstructing stringent criteria of democratic evaluation leads her to rehabilitate a classical ideal according to which all those subjected to rule within the boundaries of a state should have a say. She then scales this ideal upward, as it were, beyond the level of the nation-state to global structures of governance.[33] But in seeking to avoid some of the problems associated with the all affected principle in this way, Fraser does not adequately distinguish two distinct issues that I discussed in chapter 6: the overly causal interpretation of affectedness and the overly objectivist interpretation of interests. The all-subjected norm retains a strong trace of the assumption that it is possible to categorically determine those who have a direct stake in resisting injustice and to prioritize them over those who are less directly implicated. The trace is evident in the invocation of a strong contrast between being subjected as against merely being affected. In retaining this strong claim to be able to delimit who is subjected from who is merely affected, the all-subjected norm inadvertently risks reinstalling self-interest as the primary motivator of political action against injustice.

Despite this reservation, Fraser's introduction of the all-subjected norm as a guide for thinking about the politics of injustice is significant because it begins to specify the particular wrong that is made visible by the geographical turn in critical theories of democracy. She has commented that she now prefers the idea of subjection to that of affectedness because it is "a powerful term, laden with offensive connotations, deeply engrained in modern history, and resonant for populations across the globe."[34] It is here that Fraser's all-subjected norm is most significant, in drawing into view the degree to which claims against injustice circulate through passionate and emotively resonant discourse. Yet here, too, her formulation of the all-subjected norm threatens to work against its own potential force because she presents it as a strongly determinative principle of evaluation. Nor does Fraser explicitly explicate the particular value that the all-subjected norm installs at the heart of her theory of democratic justice. We might call it the value of freedom, although that lacks a certain degree of discrimination. To clarify the specific value at the core of critical theories of democratic justice that remains only implicit in Fraser's account of the all-subjected norm, we need to consider strands of thought that more directly elaborate on freedom as non-domination.

Responding to Structural Injustice

Fraser's concern to avoid the problems of moralism, regress, and objectivism associated with the all affected idea lead her to an overly restrictive account of her preferred alternative concept of all-subjectedness. The real significance of loosening the causal interpretation of all-affectedness, as I argued in chapter 6, lies in moving our analysis beyond the search for categorical determinations of the identity of interested parties that the all-subjected norm retains. Restricting the dynamics of justice claims only to those directly subjected to governance structures might well contribute to misunderstanding important aspects of the dynamics of justice movements. Acknowledging the entanglement of *having an interest, taking an interest, and affecting* that I discussed in the previous chapter is better suited to the task of understanding how claims of injustice are articulated, how they resonate, and how they get processed. The democratic ethos, Judith Shklar argues, "assumes that we all have a sense of injustice." We should take seriously Shklar's suggestion that "people who take up the political causes of the wretched of the earth often do not have to suffer from a personal sense of injustice."[35] Although this may well sound like an endorsement of the sort of moralism that Fraser is keen to avoid, the stronger implication is that the politics of injustice enrolls a variety of actors who are differently positioned in relation to structures of power. In affirming this view, I turn to the account of structural injustice and of political responsibility developed by Iris Marion Young. As we have seen, Young is one of Fraser's targets in her critique of the idea of all-affectedness. But Young actually provides a more nuanced understanding of the articulation of varied forms of agency through which injustice is problematized than does Fraser in her account of the all-subjected norm.

As with other theorists considered in this and previous chapters, Young makes analytical distinctions to pick out discrete aspects of grand concepts such as justice or democracy and then raises questions about how they are actually combined in practical contexts. In her groundbreaking work *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Young defines justice not simply as a matter of who gets what but in terms of power relations and the ability to influence decisions and interactions in a number of spheres of activity. She argues that power should be conceptualized as a relation, not as a thing to be possessed or distributed. Recognizing this conceptual move, something of a taken for granted position in much social theory nowadays, is crucial to appreciating the central place Young accords to domination as a source of injustice. Domination, for Young, refers to "structural or systematic phenomena that exclude people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions."[36]

Young does not suppose that domination can be neatly reduced to forms of either class power or status, as in Fraser's theory of justice. Young's analytical distinction between oppression and domination, along with her insistence that they

are in practice always combined in structural situations of injustice, undermines any clear-cut opposition between reason and affectivity, universality and particularity. In her dual definition of injustice, oppression is "the institutional constraint on self-development" and domination is "the institutional constraint on self-determination." Domination is the more obviously political concept by virtue of its reference to practices of participation. But the idea of oppression opens up a more capacious sense of the political. For Young, oppression is a condition experienced by collective groups, insofar as it is reproduced through institutionalized patterns of norms. The concept therefore implies an expansive understanding of the processes through which autonomy is curtailed, through forms of culturally sanctioned denigration, normalization, silencing, or violence. Young makes issues of embodiment, felt experience, and plural forms of expression central to the experience and articulation of injustice, rather than treating them as matters to be controlled through rationalized bracketing. As she puts it, "Justice cannot stand opposed to personal need, feeling, and desire, but names the institutional conditions that enable people to meet their needs and express their desires."[37]

Young's emphasis on justice as an institutional phenomenon accords with the argument of John Rawls, for whom the primary subject of a theory of justice is "the basic structure" of society, not evaluations of people's virtues or patterns of interaction.[38] Young's work certainly deepens the definition of the basic structure to include a range of nondistributive issues, such as the social division of labor, structures of decision-making power, and processes of cultural normalization.[39] But nevertheless the Rawlsian traits only serve to throw into relief the significance of Young's revival of critical theories of democratic justice, as distinct from ideal theories of a Rawlsian type. Across the sweep of her work on structural injustice and on political responsibility, Young recasts the methodological protocols derived from Rawls's seminal account of justice as fairness. Rawls deduces normative principles to assess actually existing states of affairs, he uses a model of monological hypothetical reasoning, and he seeks to arrive at a universal ideal of a well-structured society.

As Alison Jaggar observes, Young departs from each of these protocols. She does not start from a prior model of an ideal society, beginning instead "by reflecting on particular injustice." She does not seek to control for the messy pluralism of commitments and passions that differently placed people bring to "the conversation of justice." She treats such differences "not as an epistemic disability but rather as an epistemic resource." And finally, she does not appeal to ideal images of society to assess real situations but instead "reflects on what is actually valued by real people struggling with specific existing injustices."[40] In short, Young's approach is not simply a matter of augmenting Rawlsian ideal theory with a touch of nonideal theory. It marks a fundamentally different approach to the vocation of theorizing about justice, one that aims to find in actually existing situations of injustice the resources that point toward the possibility of democratic transformation.

This explicitly critical mode of theorizing is evident in Young's elaboration of the constitutive relationship between justice and power relations. And it underwrites the two distinct strands of her work on democratic justice: her conceptualization of *structural injustice* and her theorization of *political responsibility*. The first concept is focused on understanding the plural sources of harm to which expressions of injustice give voice. The second concept provides an account of how to analyze actions and mobilizations that seek to address structures of injustice. Let us consider the significance of both concepts in turn.

Young's account of structural injustice is premised on the argument that injustice is not identical to forms of harm that arise from individual interactions or even those that arise from specific actions of states or other corporate actors. Injustice is, for her, not a matter of either individual fault or unfair policy.[41] Two issues follow from this argument.

The first issue pertains to the way in which social scientists often approach issues of social justice. One of the strong implications of Young's work is that evaluations of injustice should not be reduced to descriptive accounts of inequality between individuals or groups. One reason for this follows from accepting at least the plausibility of what Rawls calls the "difference principle," according to which certain forms of inequality are not necessarily inconsistent with principles of democratic equality, if they are intended to and actually do bring the greatest benefit to the least advantaged.[42] This principle makes some people queasy, because it seems to be the basis for a justification of inequality. But it can just as easily be interpreted in a strongly egalitarian way "by emphasizing its tilt toward the least advantaged rather than its justification of inequality."[43] One way or the other, the point of the difference principle is that simply describing the unequal or uneven distribution of benefits resulting from a decision, policy, or process does not, in and of itself, tell us whether the pattern is fair.[44] Identifying patterns of inequality does not provide a sufficient basis for making a judgment about the justifiability of a state of affairs: "It is the causes and consequences of some pattern of inequality, rather than the pattern itself, that raises issues of justice."[45] Even more fundamentally, simply mapping inequality as if that were equivalent to exposing injustice does not meet the requirement of treating seriously the standpoints of those who are systematically disadvantaged about the meaning of the injustice they experience and feel.

The second issue that informs Young's argument about injustice not being reducible to either individual fault or bad policy is of more philosophical significance. The idea of structural injustice challenges the assumption that determining matters of justice and injustice is just a matter of sorting relations between luck and responsibility. This is the core assumption behind a broad tradition of so-called luck egalitarianism associated with thinkers such as John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, G. A. Cohen, and Robert Nozick, among others. In luck egalitarianism, matters of justice are conceptualized by determining the difference between those

actions that affect people as matters of luck and those for which they bear some responsibility as intentional actors. Luck, in short, refers to that range of factors for which one is not responsible. This way of framing injustice keeps the analytical focus squarely on determining degrees of control or lack of choice in patterns of interaction.[46] It is a form of reasoning that generates disputes over whether bad luck can and should be forestalled and compensated for. This way of addressing injustice forms the terrain of disputes between liberal and conservative political visions, and it keeps the debate squarely focused on questions of what people are owed as their due.[47]

The inequalities in resources and opportunities called "bad luck" by luck egalitarians are, from Young's perspective, actually rooted in institutions, rules, and social relations. They are, in this sense, *structural* sources of injustice. She argues that making judgments about injustice requires developing "plausible structural stories" to account for the production of resilient patterns in the ways in which institutions, rules, and interactions operate to the systematic disadvantage of some participants. It is worth pausing a moment to specify just what Young means by "structural" in her discussion of structural injustice. We can glean this by attending to her argument against the proposition that the concept of gender in feminist theory is rendered redundant and exposed as irredeemably "essentialist" by sophisticated theories of identity and subjectivity. Young insists that gender retains its importance because it is a concept of structural analysis, in the sense that it directs attention not to attributes of a person but to the variables that position people in relationships and shape their understandings of their capacities within those relationships.[48] In this spirit, Young argues that structures need to be approached from the point of view of patterns and positions that shape people's lives: "We take a structural point of view on social relations when we try to see how the actions of masses of people within a large number of institutions converge in their effects to produce such patterns and positions." From this point of view, we can say that structural injustice "exists when social processes put large groups of persons under systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time that these processes enable others to dominate or to have a wide range of opportunities for developing and exercising capacities available to them."[49] In this understanding, structural injustice represents a specific kind of harm that is distinct from the forms of harm and vulnerabilities that arise from individual action or particular examples of unfair or repressive policy.

The insistence on not collapsing institutional analysis into the analysis of individual interactions is central to Young's work on the politics of justice, and it marks her distance both from the individualism of mainstream political philosophy and from strands of poststructuralist feminism and cultural theory. Her insistence on thinking structurally in the sense outlined above, where structure is not a concept of determination but a process word, is the conceptual glue linking

her account of structural injustice and her later account of political responsibility. The concern in both cases is to not reproduce a discourse of blame and guilt by applying a single standard of justice to both social structures and individual action. Once again, the Rawlsian trait in Young's work is evident in the way in which her account of political responsibility is concerned with interpreting the possibilities of transformative action, not elaborating an ethics. It is a supplement to her critical diagnostic concept of structural injustice. Her conceptualization of political responsibility responds to the question "How should moral agents think about our responsibility in relation to structural social injustice?"[50] In answering this question, Young theorizes political responsibility as a shared practice in which questions of justice are related to the evaluation of individual-level conduct and interaction in a nonreductive way.

To appreciate that the move between Young's focus on structural injustice and her later work on political responsibility is not a move from politics to ethics, we need to recognize how her critique of the distributive paradigm of social justice marked the explicit revival of notions of political justice in critical theory. In recalling this key contribution of her work, Rainer Forst argues that the fundamental difference between the concepts of distributive and political justice lies in the fact that the distributive approach focuses narrowly on what people have. It neglects issues of power, or "the questions of the relative social and political standing of persons with respect to each other—the issue, in short, not of *what you have* but of *how you are treated*."[51] Starting from the question of how people are treated involves thinking of issues of political justice as motivated by "the fundamental impulse against arbitrariness."[52] In this understanding, struggles against injustice take as their target forms of domination, defined as "arbitrary rule that lacks legitimate grounds." If we follow Forst's explication of her work, we can see that Young's account no longer makes questions of justice dependent on what one is due. Questions of justice are about struggles against being oppressed and against being dominated.

Forst's appreciation of Young's contribution to making political justice a central reference point for critical theory captures why an account of political responsibility is the natural accompaniment of Young's focus on structures of injustice. The importance of both concepts lies in facilitating the capacity to discriminate between different positions within structural patterns of unequal power, and in particular being able to discriminate between misfortune and injustice. Michael Walzer once remarked that justice is "an art of differentiation."[53] He meant that it is important to be able to judge the difference between the imperatives and norms characteristic of different "spheres of justice." In important respects, Young, as well as Forst and other critical theorists, seeks to cultivate exactly this sort of sensitivity. But Young's attention to domination and oppression signals that her primary concern lies not in differentiating between distinct spheres of justice so much as in discriminating between forms of harm that raise questions of justice

(because they concern domination and oppression) and those that call for different forms of remedy and response. If domination and oppression are made central to understanding claims for justice, then action motivated by generosity or moral responsibility should be distinguished from action that is a response to injustice.[54] In this view, a democratic approach to these questions needs to be sensitive to different forms of harm and the different modes of claims-making through which they are problematized. It is this project that Young outlines in her work on both structures of injustice and political responsibility.

We can see, then, that there is a significant continuity between Young's insistence on thinking of injustice structurally—rather than as an effect of either individual interactions or instrumental actions—and the differentiation of modes of action that is the concern of her account of political responsibility in her later work. If the idea of structural injustice is central to Young's case against luck egalitarianism, then we can see her account of political responsibility as a necessary supplement to this argument. In important respects, her concept of responsibility represents another inflection of the theme of all affected interests, and one that is far less "objectivist" than Fraser's characterization of Young's approach suggests. This inflection of the theme of affectedness can be seen in the way that her account contrasts with other accounts of responsibility by not being backward looking. Young suggests that a retrospective disposition characterizes "liability" models of responsibility.[55] Like Fraser, who reconceptualizes ideas of all-affectedness as part of the grammar of social movement activism, Young also draws on examples of contemporary social movement and community mobilization to recast responsibility away from the notion of a prescriptive decision rule. But in contrast to Fraser's representation of the limits of the all affected principle, Young argues that theorizing about spatially extensive networks of political responsibility is not just a matter of demonstrating that people are inadvertently implicated in all sorts of other worlds by their routine actions. The lesson of Young's work is that theorizing about political responsibility in a global world requires more than just telling stories about spatially extensive networks of connection and entanglement. To put it in the terms used in the previous chapter, it requires an analysis of the ways in which different actors are affected by the structures in which they find themselves placed and also of their different capacities to affect change in and through those structures.[56]

We can now see the significance of Young's "social connection" model, in which political responsibility is understood to arise from the different ways in which various actors can be implicated in structural social processes.[57] For Young, the normative significance of spatial relationships of entanglement and interdependency requires further elaboration by tracing out patterns of claims-making, justification, and vindication. She uses the fact of geographical connectivity to fundamentally problematize the parameters of reasoning about action that often remain somewhat taken for granted in traditions of spatial thought. Rooted

in her idea of structural injustice, Young's social connection model is meant to assist in practical reasoning about possible courses of action in light of the fact of global interdependence. Young argues that there are plural "parameters of reasoning" about responsibility, and she presumes that action against injustice is not restricted to those who are directly subject to either domination or oppression.[58] Her forward-looking account of taking responsibility emphasizes issues of power, privilege, interest, and capacity for action.[59] Young's differential understanding of political responsibility therefore displaces the opposition between individual and collective responsibility that shapes so much social science and radical thought on the geographies of spatially extensive political action.[60] Young calls her alternative a model of "shared responsibility," in which responsibility is distributed across complex networks of causality and agency.[61] Her concern with differentiating the different forms of practical reason through which to determine what sorts of action follow from the demonstration of spatial interconnectivity is indicative of a commitment to thinking of the subjects of justice as free and equal citizens.

Young's work is central to the prioritizing of injustice in critical theories of democracy. It illustrates how this shift relies on what I call a heuristic sensibility, one that is concerned with developing concepts that help to orient new pathways to finding things out. In Young's conceptualization of structural injustice, she aims to specify the forms of harm to which subjects might be vulnerable in order to clarify when questions of domination are actually at stake. And in her account of political responsibility, she seeks in turn to differentiate between the forms of agency available to subjects to act in response to those harms. In both cases there is an implicit norm of freedom at work in Young's discussions. She defines structural injustice in terms of patterns that constrain people's ability to determine the course and purposes of their own actions; the same sense of the structuring of action is evident in her account of how people are variously positioned to act in response to structural injustice. Neither account supposes that the answer to situations of domination is simply to lift restrictions on action. The implicit sense of democratic freedom at work in Young's political thought is concerned with the distribution of capacities to act and with securing the institutional conditions of agency. This leads us to the specification of the understanding of freedom at work in critical theories of democratic justice.

Contestation and the Value of Non-domination

A recurring theme in Young's account of structural injustice and political responsibility is the idea that injustice arises as a specific kind of harm, the wrong of domination or oppression. In her work on political responsibility, Young develops this theme of domination by adapting Philip Pettit's notion of freedom as non-domination.[62]

Pettit's reconstruction of republican political theory, building on but also departing in significant ways from the revival of ideas of civic republicanism in the work of writers such as Hannah Arendt and Quentin Skinner, has helped to make concepts of freedom central to recent democratic theory. The appeal by critical theorists of democracy such as Young or James Bohman to Pettit's work rests on his development of a conception of freedom distinct from Isaiah Berlin's well-known concept of negative and positive liberty, in which freedom is understood as either the absence of interference or mastery over the self.[63] Pettit develops a third notion of liberty, as one of non-domination or the absence of mastery by others rather than the absence of interference.[64] Pettit's notion of non-domination is a more structural understanding of freedom than the one presented by Berlin. The idea of non-interference refers to actions in discrete situations, whereas domination refers to having arbitrary *sway* over others, or being under someone else's thumb. Domination is a form of "subjugating power," according to Pettit, involving being able to interfere on the basis of interests and opinions that are not shared by the people affected. More so than in the work of both Young and Bohman, domination for Pettit remains an interactive phenomenon, involving an agent as bearer and an agent as victim. In this understanding, domination does not necessarily require interference, nor does interference necessarily imply domination. Non-domination and non-interference are, by extension, different ideals, and they respond to different forms of harm.

Young uses Pettit's idea of non-domination to distinguish between two dimensions of freedom as self-determination. Her argument does not oppose the good of collective relations to the bad of individualism. It is rather about differentiating concepts of freedom and then working through their implications for both individual and collective agency. The first notion of self-determination is what Pettit calls freedom as non-interference, and for Young it "presupposes that agents have a domain of action that is their own which is independent of need for relationship with or influence with others." Young contrasts this with an alternative notion that "recognizes that the agency and capabilities of any individual or group is relationally constituted."[65] This second view is consistent with a feminist tradition of theorizing about "relational autonomy." This idea acknowledges that being a free, self-governing agent is a thoroughly social phenomenon and therefore requires the cultivation of one's values and needs in terms of intersubjective relationships and recognition of mutual dependencies.[66] Young therefore translates Pettit's distinction between a liberal notion of freedom as non-interference and a republican notion of freedom as non-domination into a distinction between accounts of individualist autonomous agency, on the one hand, and relational accounts of autonomous agency, on the other. The concept of freedom in the latter sense "means regulating and negotiating the relationships of people so that all are able to be secure in the knowledge that their interests, opinions, and desires for action are taken into account."[67]

Young's use of Pettit's political philosophy to embellish her own account of the value of self-determination illustrates the importance of the value of non-domination to critical theories of democracy. In fundamental respects, Young's understanding of domination in institutional and structural terms actually presupposes a stronger notion than Pettit's idea of non-domination. If domination involves not being able to affect one's own actions or their conditions, then freedom of action is relative to being able to define and realize one's needs and interests. This sense of what Lawrence Hamilton calls "real modern freedom" implies that freedom is a mode of power, in that it requires that actors are able to determine what they want to do and that they have the capacity, the power, to bring it about.[68] The proposition that "freedom is power" nicely captures the structural imagination that underwrites Young's account of injustice.

The reason to underscore Young's engagement with debates over republican theories of freedom and power in developing her account of democratic justice is to make clear that she is not simply seeking to replace a philosophical account of individual autonomy with an empirical appeal to social relations or an ontological account of the relational constitution of selves. She provides instead a more precise interpretation of why the fact of relationality matters politically. Young moves beyond the standard way in which interdependence and relationality are given a political interpretation in social theory. If both individuals and groups are embedded in extended relationships with people and things, and if this means that they are affected by and affect others through their actions, then the political significance of this does not really lie in exposing the charade of individualism or egoism, or even in revealing the entanglements of human and non-humans and thereby challenging Cartesian dualisms. The political significance of the fact of relationality—of connection, in Young's terms—lies in drawing into view how interdependence and entanglement expose people to specific forms of harm. Primary among these forms of harm, for Young, is being subjected to domination and oppression.[69]

Before proceeding further in considering the importance of the concept of non-domination to the prioritization of injustice in democratic theory, it is necessary to specify two important aspects of Pettit's reconstruction of republican theory. First is the connection he makes between freedom as non-domination and contestatory forms of democracy. And second is the distinctive account of justice that he develops on the basis of this ideal of freedom.

Pettit's account of freedom as non-domination is a republican idea, and republican theory often has a certain elitist tinge to it. But Pettit makes non-domination central to his concept of contestatory democracy, in which opposition is given a central role in a theory of democratic government. Like Shapiro, Pettit suggests that the idea of opposition, of making governing institutions answerable to the challenges of individuals and groups, "has consistently played a secondary role to the idea of putting government under popular, collective control."[70] He suggests

that the latter idea has come to dominate the meaning of democracy, not least under the sway of deliberative theories of democracy. The idea of contestation is central to Pettit's attempt to square a republican suspicion of the state as a threat to freedom as non-domination with a democratic assumption that states are crucial agents of effective popular will. Contestation is, in short, made into the medium for rendering the state nonarbitrary in its operation. Pettit presents this contestatory view of republican freedom as a critical tool that is "not designed merely to vindicate democracy as we know it."[71] He does not consider democracy as simple majoritarianism nor simply defend a version of constitutionalized liberalism that protects freedom against violations by the majority. Rather, he uses contestation to articulate a specific account of freedom with an account of effective government.[72]

Pettit's assertion that the republican model of freedom can inform a theory of democratic government requires an acceptance that there will be "sites at which public authorities make decisions and exercise power." The fundamental challenge from a democratic perspective is how to render decisions nonarbitrary so that they can be "owned" and "identified with" as emanating from "a form of decision-making in which we can see our interests furthered and our ideas respected."[73] Pettit's answer to this challenge is to argue that ensuring contestability is the best way to control for arbitrary power. What makes it possible to own a public decision that avoids the aspect of arbitrariness is "the fact that we can more or less effectively contest the decision, if we find that it does not answer to our relevant interests or relevant ideas." If decision making is not to jeopardize the freedom as non-domination of members of a polity, then "it must be subject to the constraints of a contestatory form of democracy."[74]

The second important aspect of Pettit's work to the task of centering democratic theory on the priority of injustice is a distinctive understanding of justice. Pettit's account of republican justice rests on the idea that "arrangements between citizens should be designed to promote people's equal enjoyment of freedom as non-domination."[75] In this definition, Pettit shifts questions of justice away from the strongly egalitarian grounds favored by Rawls to the grounds of freedom as non-domination. Pettit affirms a version of political justice that is concerned with the equitable distribution of the power to exercise effective agency.[76] In turn, he argues that democratic legitimacy is secured if one "looks after" equal freedom as non-domination in relations between states and citizens, which is best done by institutionalizing contestability at different scales and through multiple agents.[77]

We can see, then, that the understanding of freedom at work in Pettit's account is a thickly political one rather than a thinly liberal one. It is this that attracts the attention of critical theorists of democracy wary of the overly consensual undertones of paradigmatic deliberative democracy. In the terms we have been using in this book, Pettit redraws the all affected idea in terms of owning and identifying with decisions that are nonarbitrary. In so doing, he translates the all affected principle into a norm of effective contestability. The idea of freedom as non-domination

rests on a precise definition of domination as the arbitrary subjection to the will of others. This definition allows for a wide scope for interventions of all sorts as presumptively legitimate, insofar as they are not arbitrary, where this means that the exercise of power is subjected to reasonable public scrutiny and contestation. In this view an element of democratic coercion might be perfectly consistent with freedom, because state action is not necessarily always to be understood as a form of domination. Not all centralized, hierarchical, coercive action is equivalent to domination. Nor does Pettit make the principle of legitimacy dependent on an image of consensus or contractual agreement.[78] Legitimacy is premised instead on the possibility of effective contestation. In short, Pettit makes a reconstructed republican notion of non-domination central to imagining the possibility that the exercise of power is necessary and justified for the expansion of freedom.

As concepts of non-domination and freedom increasingly become central in critical theories of democracy, a precise reason for affirming the value of contestation and opposition emerges. Contestation is not the essence of democracy. To suppose that it is risks mistaking its central importance to democratic politics. The value of contestation arises from the recognition that democracy is a response to domination but also intrinsically raises a risk of domination of its own, insofar as those responses also require the exercise of effective concerted action. There is no need to think of this as a contradiction, a paradox, or an expression of some deep ontological structure of antagonism. It is simply a matter of being able to imagine democratic politics as multifaceted, combining different rationalities and norms.

My argument in this chapter is that by attending to the conceptual disaggregation of aspects of normative political concepts made possible by the use of spatial grammars in critical theories of democracy, we can see just how important the broad value of non-domination has become to this tradition of thought. The focus on domination is implicit in Fraser's all-subjected norm and is much more explicitly thematized across the arc of Young's work. But it is in the work of James Bohman that the concern with domination is disclosed by working through a series of geographical tropes. In Bohman's work we also find this theme most explicitly linked to a theoretical commitment to "the priority to injustice."[79]

Indeterminate Geographies of Domination

There is a specific geographical imagination at work in contemporary critical theories of democracy, one in which consideration of extended spatial relations is used to disclose particular configurations of power and the forms of harm with which they are associated. In particular, the theme of domination has emerged as the centerpoint around which theories of democratic justice are reconstructed. There is a distinctively political sense of domination at work in critical theories of democracy, a sense that departs from the epistemological and historical assump-

tions behind an earlier account of domination found in the work of the Frankfurt School. When we recognize this departure, we can see that the emphasis on domination and non-domination involves a significant reorientation in the vocation of critique in this tradition. Both the focus on domination and the focus on a new form of critique are exemplified by the account of transnational democracy developed by James Bohman, an account that is a refinement of his own pragmatist interpretation of deliberative democracy.[80]

In a pragmatist spirit, Bohman conceptualizes democracy as a form of inquiry involving co-operative problem solving.[81] In this understanding, the emergence of new "social facts" serves to problematize existing assumptions about democracy or to reveal hidden assumptions. He presents his theory of transnational democracy as a pragmatist account "to the extent that it sees new social facts as demanding a new normative and conceptual understanding of democracy and its political geography." Globalization, for Bohman, is a process that "highlights the need for philosophical work to free democratic theory from the conceptual straightjacket of its historical exemplars."[82] More precisely, according to Bohman we should shift attention away from worrying about the constitution of the demos to a broader concern with how publics are formed around problematic situations. Bohman uses geographical themes to address much deeper questions of how to think about complexity, heterogeneity, and pluralism in democratic theory.[83]

Like Young, Pettit, and Shapiro, Bohman explicitly focuses on the distinctive harm associated with domination. He understands domination as a form of structural exclusion rather than as an explicitly tyrannical form of rule. Like Young, Bohman draws on Pettit's ideas, in his case to argue that freedom as well as justice and recognition are crucial features of a critical theory of democracy.[84] But moving beyond Pettit's ideas, Bohman seeks to develop what he calls a transnational republicanism that makes struggles against domination the central feature of an account of distributed democratic agency.[85]

Bohman seeks to extend Pettit's theory of republican freedom in two ways. First, he rejects the restricted, bilateral view of domination as an exercise of arbitrary power by one actor over another that Pettit posits, in favor of a more structural view more akin to Young's. Bohman's innovation here is to develop a more dispersed view of the sources of potential domination. Second, he suggests that it is necessary to address a broader range of harms, including socioeconomic inequality and poverty, which accentuate the forms of arbitrary rule that contravene Pettit's norm of non-domination. In these two moves, while making Pettit's norm of non-domination central to his own analysis, Bohman decisively shifts to arguing that *injustice* should be the primary concept in a reconstructed theory of democracy.

From his avowedly pragmatist perspective, Bohman holds that political action is generated by shared experiences of domination, where domination refers not just to tyranny or arbitrary interference but more fundamentally to specifically

modern situations of "rule by another, one who is able to prescribe the terms of cooperation." And as for Fraser, globalization is the social fact that for Bohman makes these aspects of domination especially clear. The focus on non-domination as the key criterion of democratic judgment follows from an understanding of democracy as a reflexive order "in which people deliberate together concerning both their common life and the normative and institutional framework of democracy itself." This definition implies that a fundamental condition of democratic politics is the equal status of citizens as participants in the political domain. Using a formula similar to Fraser's principle of participatory parity, Bohman refers to this basic criterion of democracy as the "democratic minimum," which he defines as "the achievement of a normative status sufficient for citizens to exercise their creative powers to reshape democracy itself according to the demands of justice."[86] Democracy therefore requires not just freedom from domination but more specifically the capacity to initiate deliberation, or to put it another way, the power to address and make claims against those who seek to exert authority.[87] This capacity to initiate deliberation is "generative of political power," Bohman argues, more so than contestation on its own. Focusing only on contestation threatens to leave in place established institutionalized patterns, whereas the idea of initiating deliberation introduces an element of creativity into the critical theory of democracy. For Bohman, making democracy more democratic, more just, depends on the "dynamic and creative interaction between freedom of initiation and democratic accountability."[88]

Bohman's pragmatist, problem-oriented perspective leans heavily toward the communicative criteria of democratic control and away from the authoritative criteria of administrative efficacy that Fraser insists must also play an important role in an account of transnational democracy. Accordingly, for Bohman, democracy requires a plurality of forums and arenas operating at different scales and levels.[89] In Bohman's view, understanding the potentials of transnational democratic agency requires a shift in the conceptualization of the subject of democracy, away from the singular demos tied to the sovereign integrity of a territory and toward a more plural view of multiple *dêmoi*. For him, the problem of democratic domination "is overcome so long as the capacity to initiate deliberation about the terms of democracy itself is distributed among the *dêmoi* of various units and levels." The proposed shift from *the* demos to the analysis of multiple *dêmoi* is meant to decenter state-centric, juridical concepts of democracy.[90] It does so while drawing the principle of non-domination into the center not of an ideal theory of democracy but of a pragmatist inquiry of how democratic agency is actually exercised in practice.

The centrality of the themes of domination and non-domination in Bohman's account of transnational democracy follows from his understanding of both the problem and the promise of globalization. In specifying the problem, Bohman argues that global processes generate situations in which more and more people

are exposed to domination: "The current distribution of global political authority produces situations in which many people lack the very minimum of normative powers and control over their own rights and duties: they lack the capacity to make claims of justice and to initiate deliberation, and in lacking this power are subject to normatively arbitrary political domination."[91] Although this argument is similar to Fraser's, Bohman presents a much more exact statement of the specifically antidemocratic harm generated by globalization. And he does so in a way that shifts attention decisively to the various modes of influence that can be generated by public action in response to this form of harm.

What is most innovative about Bohman's account of democracy is his reconceptualization of the all affected principle in terms of "indeterminate effects." This reconceptualization complicates any straightforward, objectivist calculation of domination along the lines implied by Fraser's proposal of using the all-subjected norm as a determinative principle of democratic inclusion. Bohman proposes that global processes are primarily characterized not so much by their spatial and temporal extension but more specifically by their indefinite qualities. Rejecting a convergent view of globalization, Bohman emphasizes the differential consequences and patterns of inclusion in global processes: "A normative theory is better served by seeing how global activities do not necessarily affect everyone, or even the majority of people, in the same way. Rather, the sorts of social activities in question affect *indefinite* numbers of people." With this emphasis, Bohman transforms the objection concerning the differential exposure of subjects to being affected by global processes into a strong principle of critical analysis. Both "differences in affectedness" and the indefinite quality of affectedness mean that affected actors cannot be easily individuated. From Bohman's perspective, the indefinite character of affectedness under globalization necessarily means that some actors are implicated in the activities of others without having consented to their inclusion. The phenomenon of "interdependence via indefinite social activity" therefore describes the conditions for domination across national boundaries: "Interdependence via indefinite social activity thus establishes the scope of political obligation precisely because the circumstances of global politics emerge though nonvoluntary inclusion in indefinite cooperative schemes."[92] In short, Bohman's notion of "interdependence via indefinite social activity" effectively transforms the principle of all affected interests into a norm of non-domination.

We can see, then, that the problem with globalization from Bohman's perspective is that it expands the potential scope of domination, understood as the "nonvoluntary inclusion in indefinite cooperative schemes." But if globalization expands and multiplies situations of domination, then herein also lies the promise of expanded and reconfigured styles of political action. In contrast to Fraser and much like Dryzek, Bohman sees more potential in globalization for effective democratization without the need for new institutional configurations. His argument is that the democratic institutions required to secure non-domination are al-

ready nascent in a putatively globalized world and that no institutional scaling-up of the kind envisaged by Fraser is necessary.

For Bohman, the sorts of reasoning required by a complex, integrated world are better addressed by forming decentered, dispersed, and overlapping institutional fields than by seeking to reconstitute a singular demos or a unified public at a larger spatial scale. He sees transnational democracy as "democracy across rather than beyond borders."[93] Transnational democracy emerges around two related processes: the proliferation of multiple *dêmoi* of different scales and scope, on the one hand, and the development of what Bohman calls a distributive public sphere on the other. He envisages a democracy of *dêmoi* and distributive publics exercising a different kind of influence than that classically envisaged by models of highly integrated public spheres, generating a singular legislative will that is effectively communicated to a centered site of effective authority. Bohman does not pursue Fraser's line of reasoning, whereby the scales and shapes of public communication should ideally be made congruent with those of sites of effective authority. His image of decentered *dêmoi* and distributive publics lends itself to an interpretation in which public communication enacts a democratic function primarily through seeking to influence rather than exercise authority.

Although Bohman presents his account as a theory of transnational democracy, it might be more appropriate to interpret it as using the figure of globalization to conceptually reconfigure the relationships between different aspects of democratic theory and practice. Bohman's strongest claim is that democracy should be theorized primarily in relation to the principle of "freedom as self-determination."[94] This contrasts with the ideal model of self-legislation prevalent in much democratic theory. The image of a people giving themselves their own laws always generates difficulties when it comes to the practical facts of institutional complexity and issues of numerical or spatial scale. But the significance of Bohman's understanding of democracy extends beyond the specific issue of the spatial extension of social interactions.[95] Bohman's contribution is to take an understanding of what he refers to as "the new circumstances of politics" and use it to justify a critical norm of democracy: the maximization of self-determination of those affected in relation to the interdependencies into which their actions are woven. If this, like ideas of all-affectedness, sounds a little idealistic and unmanageable, then it is important to emphasize that the pragmatist dimension of Bohman's argument transforms our understanding of why matters of democratic justice arise as issues in the first place. In the revised view traced throughout this chapter, the questions of inclusion and membership for which the theme of affectedness is most often invoked as a solution should not be thought of as foundational questions of democracy at all. They emerge only in problematic contexts where the effects of actions and the identity of those affected are uncertain in a way that feels salient to participants. In short, not all interdependencies raise democratic questions, only those where self-determination—that is, issues of domination—arises

as a problem.[96] Of course, this formulation might seem to raise the question of *how* to decide whether a situation of domination actually pertains. We will see in chapter 8 how giving priority to injustice in theories of democracy helps to flesh out an answer to that question.

Toward the Priority of Injustice

Chapter 6 traced some of the ways in which critical theories of deliberative democracy reformulate the all affected principle in an action-theoretic register. This chapter has developed this revision further by tracing how conceptual transformations of the all affected idea through a spatial grammar of globalization and transnationalism draw into view a particular form of harm against which democratic politics is understood to be a response and bulwark—the wrong of being subjected to arbitrary direction by the will of others. In her discussion of transnational public spheres, Nancy Fraser develops the idea, already anticipated in important ways by Robert Dahl, that all-affectedness should be understood as a register of oppositional claims-making against arbitrary subjection. Iris Marion Young also develops an account of injustice centered on the specific harm of domination arising from structural patterns of disadvantage, prejudice, and exploitation. And James Bohman takes the well-worn argument that all-affectedness cannot be objectively tracked and turns it into a strong argument that global processes inherently carry the risk of exposing people to arbitrary rule.

Each of these theorists shifts the norm of all-affectedness away from a strictly objective, causal interpretation of a standard to be applied monologically to settle questions of democratic inclusion. They favor instead dialogical models in which affectedness emerges through a range of communicative registers of claims-making. Across the work of the thinkers considered in chapters 6 and 7, the idea of all-affectedness retains its significance because it is recast as a worldly principle, one used to coordinate, justify, and problematize existing social relations. Understood in this spirit, the idea, Archon Fung suggests, still captures something important about contemporary democratic sensibilities across a whole range of issues: "The principle of affected interests remains one of the most firm and widespread democratic intuitions. The sensibility that people should be able to influence decisions that affect them grounds not only commitments to representative government, but complaints about the democratic deficits of organizations like the European Union, World Trade Organization, and Royal Dutch Shell corporation. It drives demands for participation not just upward from the nation-state, but also outward—into corporations and nongovernmental organizations—as well as downward—into local governments, administrative agencies, communities, and neighborhoods."[97] Here Fung presents the all affected norm not as a solution to questions of institutional or constitutional design but as a dy-

namic principle that alerts us to exclusions and guides adjustments and reforms. It provides a vocabulary for making complaints and articulating demands. Fung's suggestion implies in turn that the all affected idea can serve as a heuristic to guide the analysis of the ways in which a broad array of non-state actors formulate democratic claims in a world in which a variety of both state and non-state actors impinge on people's lives. He returns us, then, to Dahl's proposition that the all affected norm is a good place to start asking questions about the scope and quality of democratic inclusion.

The reorientation of democratic theory around concepts of domination, which has been the focus of this chapter, alters the way in which the vocation of critical theory is viewed. It should turn attention away from a primary concern with establishing or applying strong normative principles of ideal justice. In a more pragmatist spirit, the concern with the value of non-domination focuses attention instead on developing a more reflexive idea of critical theory, understood as a means of informing inquiry into the dynamics of domination and felt experiences of injustice. Chapter 8 elaborates on the significance of this reorientation of the tasks of critical theory.

CHAPTER 8

The Sense of Injustice

> Justice in its emphatic sense, justice as a fiery sword, is the always practical, always eventful, always political struggle for the elimination of injustice.
>
> **—Jay Bernstein**

The reorientation around the value of non-domination that I discussed in the last chapter is at the heart of the prioritization of injustice in critical theory. In this chapter, we will see that this involves moving away from thinking of injustice as either an empirical deficit measured against an ideal of justice or a conceptual derivative of such an ideal. Among other things, we will see that the prioritization of injustice involves reimagining the dynamics through which demands for democratization emerge in the world in a way consistent with the discussion in chapter 2. This chapter therefore seeks to demonstrate why critiques of overly rationalistic accounts of universal justice do not have to consign us to the scholastic pieties associated with postfoundational ontologies. These ontologies leave us in the awkward skeptical position of presuming that we have to hold fast in practice to assumptions that we profess to know, theoretically, to be false. The alternative path is to reorder the relationship between justice and injustice so that universalization can be approached as a horizon for actions responding to situated experiences of the wrongs of injustice.

My purpose in this chapter is to work through the significance of the observable shift in discussions of issues of democracy in critical theory, as well as in strands of analytical political philosophy, toward conceptualizing injustice independently from a prior formulation of a principle of justice. The lines of thought I reconstruct invite us to stop thinking of injustice as an observable deviation from justice, understood as a positive ideal. I argue that the thinkers considered here all share the intent to contest "the idea that injustice is defined and made recognizable by some positive vision of justice, that the conception of justice is primary."[1] The purpose of contesting this picture is to rearrange the conceptual order of justice and injustice.

In speaking of the priority of injustice, I am following Jay Bernstein's proposition that "injustice is the medium of real justice."[2] According to Bernstein, this premise should reorient the vocation of critical theory away from developing ideals of equal treatment or models of discourse ethics against which the world can be evaluated. Instead, priority should be given to the analysis of the struggles against domination that call such normative ideals into existence in the first place. I will argue that the reordering of the relations between ideas of justice and experiences of injustice also involves a heightened interest in the role of the passions in reasoning about moral action, indicating negative emotions such as anger, disgust, and shame as much as positive ones such as compassion and empathy.[3]

The emphasis on the feeling for injustice as a primary mobilizing force in political action is a theme that crosses between critical theories of action and ontologies of the political considered in part 2. For example, we saw in chapter 4 that Jacques Rancière's account of proper politics gives primacy to the idea that democracy emerges as a response to the wrong of injustice. Rancière tends to impose a singular meaning on action against the felt wrongs of injustice, which he presents as always and everywhere to involve a claim for equality. Simon Critchley better captures the importance of the emphasis on the passions in motivating action against injustice. He shares with the tradition of Left ontology discussed in part 2 a view of politics that is marked by a deep suspicion of the state and an opposition to what is seen as a pacified field of consensus. He also privileges a view of democracy not as a political regime but as a movement of democratization through which political life is formed and contested. But Critchley keeps a distance from the view that politics can be deduced from ontology, a view he suggests is shared by theorists of hegemony as much as it is held by theorists of immanent communism and insurgent anarchism. He rejects the assumption that the meaning of the political can be derived from a prior ontological grounding in affect, abundance, lack, species being, or vitalism: "There is no transitivity between ontology and politics."[4]

In contrast to strongly ontological interpretations of the political, Critchley proposes an ethical account of the political, one in which the becoming political of a situation disrupts any appearance of ontological solidity that affairs might have. He proposes that politics should be understood as a practice generated in response to situations of injustice. The process of becoming political is provoked by the experience of the "ethical demand," referring to the exposure of a subject to the call of the Other. In this understanding, derived from the responsive phenomenology developed by Emmanuel Levinas and embellished by Jacques Derrida, the experience of the universal emerges through the provocation of passions that move subjects to action.[5] Critchley therefore provides an account of the political that seeks to displace the primacy accorded to ontologies of lack, constitutive outsides, or dissensus, all of which elide any place for motivated action. What is most distinctive about Critchley's account of the political is, then, the emphasis it places on accounting for situated action by embodied subjects.

In his explicit concern with "the problem of motivation in politics," Critchley tends to suppose that the absence of philosophically robust justification of morally good action means that what we need is an account of the cultivation of the ethical dispositions required to act in the absence of secure foundations.[6] It would be a mistake, however, to read his account of motivation as one that privileges mere ethics over proper politics. Critchley's discussion of the political is best approached as an account in which ethics is the theme under which questions of the motivation of action are explicitly addressed. Read in this way, Critchley helps us draw into view the full significance of the emphasis on the priority of injustice that one finds across a number of strands of contemporary political thought—this emphasis is an index of a concern for analyzing the various rationalities of action involved in the assertion and affirmation of claims of injustice that require a democratic response.

The feeling for justice is often associated with positive affects—with dispositions toward compassion, empathy, and forgiveness—which, it is easily assumed, can and should be actively cultivated and harnessed toward greater fairness. In his account of the motivations of political action, however, Critchley proposes that anger is "the first political emotion."[7] It is the emotion generated in contexts of "political disappointment" and one that produces motion, that is, that moves the subject to action. Whether or not we agree that there is a primary political emotion, Critchley's proposal does illustrate the degree to which any affirmation of the priority of injustice is closely associated with a recentering of the passions in accounting for political action. If we favor a focus on injustice and how feelings like anger can motivate action against it, as Critchley does, then we shift attention away from positive dispositions. A feeling for justice might also involve a series of "the antipathetic passions," such as envy, jealousy, resentment, outrage, revenge, and indignation.[8] Another way of glossing the point is that we should not presume that understanding the feelings that animate a concern with injustice is an excuse to reduce our concerns to the cultivation of ethical relationships. Justice may or may not be thought of as a virtue. But the argument for the priority of injustice should certainly not be reduced to that dimension of human affairs alone.

Giving priority to injustice involves, in no small part, affirming the affective dynamics through which political action is generated as a response to varied forms of harm, injury, or maltreatment. We might view this affirmation as simply a variation on a long-standing idea most famously associated with David Hume, for whom passions and affections motivate action.[9] The important implication is that acting, including acting morally, is not best understood as dependent on grasping and applying a rational principle or truth. The point of affirming this understanding of action, though, is not to assert that reason is merely an ephemeral layer placed over a roiling tumult of unruly emotions, either in a celebratory way or as a matter to be bemoaned. That conclusion holds fast to a single picture of reason as opposed to the passions, when in fact the point of the affirmation is to

encourage us to change our picture of reasoning and rationality.[10] The significant implication of the affirmation of the passions is that any concern for justice has its origins in capacities to be moved by injustice and that our picture of reasoning about justice needs to be adjusted accordingly.

The shift toward prioritizing injustice has certain precedents, we will see, but it is most clearly expressed in the recent work of Amartya Sen, speaking to debates in analytical political philosophy, and in the theory of recognition developed by Axel Honneth, seeking to reconfigure the tradition of critical theory. Before discussing these two thinkers, I turn to a consideration of how giving priority to injustice is associated with an argument for giving greater attention to the "sense of injustice" in moral reasoning.

The Sense of Injustice

There is, of course, already a long tradition of concern with the theme of injustice in social theory. Yet the focus of theorizing about injustice often remains on analyzing the dynamics of resistance to taken-for-granted sources of harm, such as patterns of capitalist exploitation of labor and the degradation of the environment or formations of gendered, sexualized, and racialized oppression.[11] In forms of radical empiricism, the amassing of empirical data on patterns of inequality is often equated with mapping injustice, the persistence of which is attributed to a set of pernicious "beliefs."[12] These ways of acknowledging injustice as an animating dynamic of political life end up reproducing the same ordering found in ideal theories of justice, in which injustice appears as the suspension of justice—an ordering illustrated by the stylistic ubiquity of the bracketing together of justice and injustice as "(in)justice."

While wary of venturing too far into the terrain of normative justification, critical social science is certainly often motivated by a concern to make explicit the senses of injustice that animate particular fields of contention. This is an important commitment worth further development. Debates about environmental justice and about "the right to the city" are examples of this type of analysis. They draw into view two important issues for how we think about the relationship between justice and injustice. The first is that normative understandings of justice are worldly principles, which emerge from situated conflicts and orient action.[13] The second is the proposition that critical analysis starts not so much from a clear-sighted definition of justice but from a shared abhorrence at some form of wrong.[14]

We should certainly take seriously the recommendation to start off from injustice. But we need to avoid the impression that one could reconstruct the meaning of justice by simply tracing the explicit content of visible expressions of feelings of injustice. To assume that one can do so only threatens to underplay the signif-

icance of giving priority to injustice. The argument for the priority of injustice in critical theory should not be too readily interpreted as requiring an elective identification with favored activist voices or with the expressions of victims. To understand why, we need to dwell a little longer on the significance of the idea of "the sense of injustice" that lies behind the argument for giving priority to injustice in democratic theory.

The idea of the sense of injustice is a relatively recent one in political philosophy. It does have some precedents, for example in the legal theory of Edmond Cahn.[15] He argued that the sense of injustice is an almost natural feeling that gives impetus to actions against violations of equality or dignity. The implication of Cahn's concept of the sense of injustice is that one can determine the meaning of justice by mapping the explicit content of expressions of the sense of injustice. The sense of injustice, in this account, is a kind of empirical guide to the meaning of justice. More recent work that emphasizes the sense of injustice does not make the same sort of strong naturalistic claim as Cahn, nor does it necessarily think of explicit opposition to injustice as a guide to the proper meaning of justice. It involves a much more fundamental reordering of the conceptual relations between justice and injustice.

Contemporary treatments of the idea of the sense of injustice are primarily associated with an argument developed by Judith Shklar. In *The Faces of Injustice*, Shklar observes that justice has been the privileged object of normative theorizing in political philosophy, whereas injustice has been thought of as an empirical fact that is primarily felt as a lack or absence of justice. Justice is often assumed to be a positive ideal, the primary concept from which injustice is theoretically derived and the idea from which the real world is found to empirically deviate. Giving justice conceptual priority over injustice is a feature of approaches that seek categorical definitions of the meaning of justice as well as those that suggest justice is merely a charade obscuring relations of power and violence.[16] Shklar's account of the sense of injustice challenges both the idealistic and the cynical interpretation of the meaning of justice.

Shklar argues that moral and political philosophy (she has in mind the egalitarian tradition of thought represented and revived by John Rawls) take for granted that "injustice is simply the absence of justice, and that once we know what is just, we will know all we need to know." She calls this "the normal model" of thinking about justice, in which the emphasis is on perfecting robust foundational accounts of justice and virtue. The task of moral reasoning is taken to be defining the ideal model of a just society, against which actual examples of social arrangements can be critically evaluated. The normal model does not necessarily ignore injustice, but it does tend to reduce it to "a prelude to or a rejection and breakdown of justice, as if injustice were a surprising abnormality."[17] In contrast, Shklar argues that injustice is a normal feature of existing social systems, but she also observes that explicit claims for redress, revenge, or retribution are not actually common at all.

So the question arises of just how and why the sense of injustice gets awakened and articulated when it does arise.

The significance of Shklar's argument is not simply its recognition that injustice is a more routine feature of social life than is often supposed. Nor is her argument simply about analyzing the causes of injustice. The most powerful claim she makes is that the fundamental weakness of ideal theories of justice arises from the absence of the perspective of victims of injustice. Shklar observes that debates about how to define the distinction between misfortune and injustice, so central to the tradition of luck egalitarianism, arise from adopting the perspective of a reasoning subject more or less prepared to act on behalf of victims of some wrong. These theories tend to be resolutely monological in tone. Her deceptively simple suggestion is that theories of justice should actually make more effort to include the perspective of the victim in their frameworks of analysis. Doing so draws into view the importance of the passions in articulating claims of injustice: "No theory of either justice or injustice can be complete if it does not take account of the subjective sense of injustice and the sentiments that make us cry out for revenge."[18] In this formulation, Shklar makes clear that questions of injustice are intimately connected to passionate forms of expression. Her argument has affinities with Stanley Cavell's criticism of John Rawls's idea of "the conversation of justice," discussed in chapter 5, in which Cavell argues that Rawls's model does not open itself up to the full variety of ways in which injustice is experienced and expressed. In this respect, the crucial claim that Shklar makes in elaborating on the need to think more deeply about victimhood is that there is a fundamental asymmetry between justice and injustice. Justice, she argues, "radiates no emotional appeal."[19] The value of justice lies, after all, in impartiality and universality. Injustice, on the other hand, is affectively rich in a way that doing justice is not, and is not meant to be. Injustice, to put it another way, is felt and necessarily particular and partial in a way in which justice is not.

The idea that injustice is passionately felt while justice is not might seem to imply that acknowledging injustice not only requires identification with the viewpoints of its victims but does so in a way that threatens any possibility of rational coordination of public life by ceding authority to subjective expressions of grievance or injury. But Shklar's critique of the normal model of justice should not be mistaken for an argument in favor of identifying wholly with victims of injustice. The purpose of her argument is not to replace the certainties of monological modes of philosophical reasoning with the certainties provided by idealizations of victimhood.[20] The element of skepticism directed toward the authority of normal models of justice by attending to subjective claims of injustice cuts both ways for Shklar, so that those claims themselves are accompanied by doubts and uncertainties as to their validity. Proposing that the perspective of victims must be included in any account of injustice is, then, related to Shklar's insistence that it is not enough to just listen and affirm victims' claims of injustice. As we will see,

to think that it is enough might actually be one route to reproducing injustice of certain sorts. Shklar's focus remains squarely on the political question of how to evaluate claims and expressions of injustice.

Shklar does not suppose that the most pressing task we face is to develop a standard against which claims of justice can be adjudicated. Her argument is that democracy is the best political frame for responding to expressions of the sense of injustice, because it does not silence "the voice of the aggrieved and accepts expressions of felt injustice as a mandate for change."[21] Shklar thinks of democracy as a framework for mobilizing shared experiences of injustice, in order to think through the significance of particular claims. Rather than presume that those claims are to be adjudicated by philosophical legislators or their underlying causes explained by social scientists, she insists that making sense of claims of injustice must take place through forms of public intercourse. Shklar's argument is, then, one version of an argument that seeks to dethrone an impartial model of universal rationality by according a privileged place to the public sharing and evaluation of narratives of injustice.

To fully grasp the implications of Shklar's argument about the animating force of the sense of injustice for how we think about the forms of reasoning required of critical thought about democracy, we can usefully turn to Cora Diamond's account of the expression and response to injustice. Elaborating on an issue also central to Shklar's argument, Diamond presumes that there is a difference in the positions of the victims of injustice and of those placed in a position of response. Diamond is not directly concerned with the issue of democratic justice but rather with the grounds for extending justice to animals.[22] The significance of her argument here is that she asks us to focus on the difficulty of responding to injustice *as* injustice. She proposes that matters of justice arise in scenes of exposure to the face of injustice.[23] Justice is therefore derived not first and foremost from considerations of universal rights but from relations of attention: "The capacity to respond to injustice as injustice depends, not on the capacity to work out what is fair, but on the capacity really to see, really to take in, what it is for a human being to be harmed. This is not easy for us; it requires a recognition of our own vulnerability, and there are not comparable demands on us in thinking about the deprivation of rights."[24] Like Shklar, and Young as well, Diamond does not assume that there is a single subject-position from which such matters can be addressed to impartially decide who is a bearer of rights. She asserts that what is crucial for doing justice is convening the shared space between victims and those placed under a demand for a response. Diamond suggests that those placed under a demand for justice often disavow any shared sense of vulnerability. In her view, the "capacity to respond to injustice as injustice" does not involve calculating fair shares from a distance, nor an appreciation of philosophical arguments about shared capacities for reasoning or even for suffering. It arises first and foremost from the difficult acceptance by a subject of his or

her own of vulnerability, a response that arises in scenes of "acknowledgment" of the claims of others rather than in a knowing relation of what is right, good, or justifiable—in an appreciation, that is, that what is required is a response to a claim, not verification.[25]

Diamond's account of injustice might well appear to have more to do with questions of moral philosophy than of democratic theory. But the relevance of her account lies in establishing that questions about who should be afforded standing as a subject of justice are not open to purely philosophical or explanatory determination. Diamond helps us see that there is an irreducibly ethical dimension to these questions, that is, a dimension that exceeds purely rational calculation or explanatory knowledge but draws on capacities to be affected by the claims of others for acknowledgement. These ethical scenes of acknowledgement certainly do not negate the significance of the political. From the perspective of the heterodox tradition I am reconstructing here, such claims take on their full value only by passing through the worlds of public reasoning.

In their shared attention to experiences of vulnerability as a condition through which the sense of injustice emerges, both Shklar and Diamond put a premium on the importance of not presuming in advance that all forms of need or all demands for attention are of the same type. We have returned here to the argument encountered in chapter 7 concerning the distinctly political quality of justice understood as "the fundamental impulse against arbitrariness."[26] Diamond in particular reminds us that there are all sorts of situations in which subjects are called on to respond to the needs and claims of others but that not all of these are necessarily situations of injustice. In important respects, both Shklar and Diamond presume that questions of justice require the capacity for discrimination, that is, the capacity to exercise exemplary judgment.[27] They both emphasize the importance of attending to the grammar of public expressions of harm in order to formulate the appropriate response that might be articulated in those expressions.

Diamond helps us see that what is most at stake in Shklar's argument about the animating force of the sense of injustice in not an assertion of the primacy of a nonrational kernel at the core of political life. And it is not an argument about the ontological primacy of emotions or the passions. The force of the argument lies, rather, in the way it shifts the picture of the tasks of critical analysis. Shklar's argument about the democratic processing of the sense of injustice dovetails with other arguments about the importance of thinking of justice dialogically. Shklar's account of the sense of injustice is, therefore, one example of a broader tradition of thought that affirms the affective dimensions of justice claims. This affirmation is the means by which the agonistic aspects of political life are integrated into traditions of reasoning that have previously overestimated the importance of impartiality as the key to securing universal justice claims.

The characteristic feature of this heterodox tradition is that appeals to emotion, the use of personal testimony or anecdote, and passionate rhetoric are all

seen to be central both to generating claims of injustice and in processing them democratically.[28] These modes of expression are often thought of as distinct from reasons, arguments, principles, and justifications, all of which have a somewhat rationalistic ring to them. But the stark distinction between the rational and the more-than-rational does not quite hold up. As Fraser explains, "In political discourse telling a story or adducing an exemplar is not an alternative to advancing a reason. Rather, it is itself a form of argumentation in the broad sense, another way of advancing a reason or justifying a claim."[29] This understanding of multiple "genres of reasoning," far from assuming that reaching agreement requires the bracketing of passions and moral sentiments, takes for granted that affective attachments to particular conceptions of the good serve as a resource for cultivating democratic dispositions toward justice.[30] It is an understanding that leads to the view that justice is best advanced by institutionalizing what Stuart Hampshire calls "disputable reasoning" rather than "convergent reasoning." In Hampshire's view, the principle of justice holds simply "that contrary claims are heard." Justice *as* conflict, in this sense, is governed by rationality understood simply as "the habit of balancing pros and cons in argument."[31]

Taken together as examples of a broader strand of thought, both Shklar's and Diamond's elaborations of the theme of the sense of injustice represent a fundamental challenge to the normal way of reasoning about justice. Justice is normally assumed to be a positive ideal from which injustice is a deviation and against which various real world approximations or departures can be measured. Understood in this way, the normal model of justice also shapes a settled way of thinking about the respective tasks of philosophical reflection and social science analysis. The revised view of the priority of injustice that follows from acknowledging the force of Shklar and Diamond's arguments requires us to rethink this intellectual settlement.

An Injustice-Centered Theory of Justice

The train of thought Shklar opens up requires us to rethink some of the conventions of critical theory, not least as they pertain to the self-understanding of critical social science. I think that Shklar's critique of the normal model of justice in moral and political philosophy also accurately describes important features of how justice and injustice are approached in critical social science. While social scientists often display a keen sense of the normality of injustice that Shklar finds so lacking in philosophical accounts of justice, a wariness toward normative discourse means that they usually apprehend injustice against the background of an implicit model of ideal justice. As a result, injustice shows up as the absence of justice in exactly the way that Shklar finds typical of the normal model in philosophy. We can see this pattern of thought in three distinct but overlapping forms of critical reasoning

in social science. First, there is a style of critical social science description and explanation in which injustice becomes visible by comparing actual patterns of disadvantage against ideal theories derived from other fields. In this type of analysis, the meaning of injustice remains subservient to the demonstration of the absence of justice.[32] Second, there is a widely dispersed style of theory in which appeals to superior ontologies or explanatory theories are presumed to trump what are regarded as the inherently individualizing tendencies of normative reasoning about the justifiability of particular social arrangements.[33] And third, there is a style of analysis that presumes that simply demonstrating the empirical fact of inequality is equivalent to providing evidence of injustice.

The problem with these forms of critical social science is that they presume that philosophy is a field to which one can appeal when one needs ideals and principles. But philosophical accounts of justice do not necessarily lack adequate social science foundations needed to explain departures from justice or the endemic generation of injustice. In fact, the standard social scientific suspicion of philosophical concepts actually compounds the most fundamental problem with normative theories of justice. This problem, as we have seen, is the recurring tendency to theorize about these matters monologically, as if injustice is an objectively identifiable phenomenon that can be established either by arriving at a normatively robust foundational account of justice or by arriving at an epistemologically robust or ontologically comprehensive account of the causes of exploitation or inequality.

So it turns out that these two approaches—the normatively philosophical and the explanatorily social scientific—are perfectly well suited to one another, each feeding off the presumed authority of the other: on the one hand to define the ideal of justice and on the other to explain causal dynamics. Neither approach adequately answers Shklar's challenge of taking seriously the sense of injustice as a starting point for theorizing about justice nor the way in which this argument draws democracy into the center of such theorizing.

The implicit accommodation between these two fields revolves around the continuing commitment to thinking of justice primarily as an ideal. It is a way of thinking that means that the wrongs of injustice are always assumed to show up as an absence of justice. From this shared perspective, to accept that the grammar of justice necessarily draws on partial modes of passionate utterance that give voice to the sense of injustice and that claims-making is the crucial practice through which injustice is expressed and worked through democratically seems to threaten to introduce a ruinous dimension of particularism into a field that should be governed by universal principles. The tendency to think of difference, partiality, pluralism, and variety as either a threat or rebuke to universal criteria of justice arises from a shared inclination to think that the value of universalism lies in an aspiration toward impartiality. To insist on thinking that the main problem to be addressed in developing a critical theory of democracy is one of universality ver-

sus particularity generates the temptation to reassert some principle of universal validity that can synthesize across observable differences and variety.[34]

What gets lost in the worry about the threat of particularism introduced by affirming the role of the passions in democratic theory is a recognition that debates about the universal status of normative concepts tend to revolve around the confrontation between two different senses of the universal: the universal as a standpoint of impartiality and universality as a horizon of inclusion. We have already seen how, in different ways, thinkers such as Habermas, Benhabib, and Young recast these debates by confronting the claims of impartial universalism embedded in political thought with an appreciation of the modes of inclusive universalism through which claims of justice are articulated. My argument here is that these critical theorists, among others, demonstrate that there is no need to abandon the terrain of justice for deeper and deeper levels of ontological creativity. Doing so leaves one only ever able to assert the paradoxical contingency of universal principles, or to reassert the need to synthesize particular viewpoints into a universal agreement. By contrast, taking the priority of injustice seriously is a path to disrupting the theoretical order according to which injustice shows up only against the background of more or less implicitly universal models of ideal justice.

The belief that one's ability to call a state of affairs unjust requires recourse to universal standards might not be the best way of thinking about how criteria actually work, as we saw in chapter 2. The presumption that critique has to depend on universal standards of some sort is a defining feature of the normal model of thinking of injustice as the absence of some ideal condition, however reluctantly that ideal might be specified. As Elizabeth Wolgast has argued, the presumption that judgments of injustice require a standard inevitably "leads us back to the assumption that justice must be some kind of ideal." Thinking that we must in advance have a standard against which to judge affairs gets the grammar of justice the wrong way around. The meaning of the concept of justice is best approached as an emergent response to an experience of harm, injury, or wrong: "We craft responses to wrong, our purpose being not to satisfy some preconceived picture of justice but to address the snares of injustice."[35] The strong implication of this simple-sounding proposition is that justice is something developed not to satisfy an ideal model but in relation to situated expressions of injustice. In short, justice is not an ideal. It is a condition that is approached through processes of *re*pair, *re*dress, *re*paration, and *re*distribution.

This way of thinking about the grammar of justice requires us to find ways of conceptualizing injustice independently from a prior formulation of a universal principle of justice. If Shklar and Diamond, alongside thinkers such as Stanley Cavell and Stuart Hampshire, provide resources for doing so in a philosophical register, then Amartya Sen provides a social science imagination for doing so.[36] Sen's work is well known for its contributions to welfare economics and social choice theory, for its excoriating critique of the narrow rationalities of mainstream

economic thinking, and for drawing ethical issues into economic thinking. Sen's elaboration of the "capabilities approach" to human development has important implications for how issues of justice are theorized, not least in making freedom the central reference point for the theory of justice.[37] From my perspective here, one of Sen's most significant contributions is to establish that theories of justice are always theories of some form of equality. This point extends even to theories that eschew egalitarianism in preference to some other value such as freedom. He insists that the core question facing any normative theory is not "why equality?" but "equality of what?" This question is important here partly as a corrective to the sweeping assertion found in the work of Jacques Rancière, who invokes "equality" as a catchall term to characterize any dissensual interruption of settled orders. Sen's work also develops a distinctive reconciliation between apparently contradictory egalitarian principles of justice and the value of freedom. Sen requires us to think more carefully about the content of demands for equality, and not only in the technical sense of deciding on the "focal variables" that might be used to assess the fairness of some given state of affairs.[38] More fundamentally than this, his approach to questions of justice and injustice rests on the idea that it is both necessary and possible to differentiate the various forms of harm that generate expressions of injustice.

As with other thinkers we have considered in elaborating on the prioritization of injustice in democratic theory, Sen elaborates his work in conversation with John Rawls's account of justice as fairness. Rawls emphasizes equality in access to the means of freedom as his core principle of justice. By contrast, for Sen, freedom needs to be "distinguished *both* from the *means* that sustain it and from the *achievements* that it sustains." Sen's concern is, then, with "equality of freedom," and his argument is that this value relates to but is not equivalent to a concern with either the means or results of freedom. From his perspective, freedom is the reference point for a focus on "our capability to achieve valuable functionings that make up our lives, and more generally, our freedom to promote objectives we have reason to value."[39] Freedom, for Sen, is about effective agency, an idea we have already seen at work in critical theories of democracy discussed in chapter 7 under the themes of non-domination and freedom as power. The focus of Sen's account is with the extent of freedom in this sense.

My primary interest here in Sen's work is with the way in which it explicitly questions the expectations that are brought to the task of theorizing about justice.[40] Specifically, his interest in making sense of the force of ideas of injustice and justice in the world, in contrast to the development of models of a just society, recommends him to our attention in further understanding the turn to the priority of injustice in democratic theory. Sen has sought to develop and deepen the critique of the normal model of justice identified by Shklar, and he does so in a way that starts off from recognition of the sense of injustice as the core animating dynamic of the politics of social justice. His approach is to focus on "trying to identify

manifestly unjust situations that can be feasibly bettered."[41] This focus is related to the idea that theories of justice are forms of practical reasoning, which means that they necessarily include considerations of feasibility and practicability. Herein lies the core contribution of Sen's work as a social scientist in developing a new paradigm of critical analysis guided by the maxim of being "against injustice."[42] His aim, he has asserted, is to contribute to the development of "an injustice-centred theory of justice."[43]

The central argument of Sen's work on justice is that rather than develop foundational accounts of what a just society would look like, we should focus on what he calls manifest or patent injustice: "The greatest relevance of ideas of justice lies in the identification of *patent injustice*, on which reasoned agreement is possible, rather than in the derivation of some extant formula for how the world should be precisely run." The argument about the need to focus on patent injustice might sound like a standard form of social science impatience with high theory. Yet in Sen's hands, the strong claim about patent injustice follows from "the emergence of a shared recognition that 'injustice' may be dependent on open discussion of issues and feasibilities." This affirmation of the role of public discussion in recognizing patent injustice is related to the centrality Sen accords to an expansive sense of democracy. It is related in particular to a commitment to treating seriously the agency and judgment of individuals, rather than treating people as "patients" to be dispensed various benefits.[44]

The proposition that the recognition of injustice emerges through public deliberation is a crucial dimension of Sen's approach, one that resonates with arguments we have already considered by Benhabib, Diamond, Fraser, Shklar, Young, and others. Far being self-evident and requiring no further elaboration, patent injustice turns out to be something that can be apprehended only through an open public culture of discussion and debate. In short, the argument about the need to start from patent injustices is part of a broader argument about a shift in reasoning about matters of justice, in which evaluating the quality of public debate plays a central role.

The most coherent and explicit treatment of the argument for starting from patent injustice is found in Sen's *The Idea of Justice*. The book builds on Sen's own argument that democracy is not uniquely Western and also on recognition of the degree to which the contemporary reconfiguration of ideas of justice draws significantly from political contexts outside the West. The starting assumption in *The Idea of Justice* is that a workable account of social justice needs to begin from readily available understandings of injustice, rather than presuming that what is required is a philosophically robust model of the ideal just society: "A theory of justice that can serve as the basis of practical reasoning must include ways of judging how to reduce injustice and advance justice, rather than aiming only at the characterization of perfectly just societies."[45] Sen's principal claim is that the identification of what he now refers to as "manifest injustice" needs to be made more

central to theories of justice. He is not suggesting that we just remain at the level of these intuitions but rather that manifest injustices should be given precedence in the reorientation of how matters of justice are conceptualized. The core feature of his argument is the contrast between an approach that he calls "transcendental institutionalism," which seeks to identify perfectly just conditions along the lines of Shklar's normal model, and a comparative approach that focuses on whether specific changes can enhance justice.

In discussing transcendental institutionalism, Sen again takes Rawls's approach to theorizing justice as his reference point. Sen argues against the sort of approach that seeks to develop a perfect model of principles of justice and then translates these into blueprints. He suggests that the types of answers that transcendental institutionalism gives about perfectly just orders "are quite distinct and distant from the type of concerns that engage people in discussions on justice and injustice in the world (for example, iniquities of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, torture, racism, female subjugation, arbitrary incarceration, or medical exclusion as social features that need remedying)."[46] As with other thinkers we have discussed, Sen argues here that any consideration of justice must take seriously the very different kinds of harm that animate the sense of injustice.

The most contentious claim that Sen makes against "normal" philosophies of justice is that arguments about foundational principles are not really very helpful in advancing the cause of justice: "If a theory of justice is to guide reasoned choice of policies, strategies or institutions, then the identification of fully just social arrangements is neither necessary nor sufficient." This double claim has generated much debate. I would suggest that the claim about the lack of necessity of concepts of a just society might actually overlook the degree to which ideal theories of justice are used pragmatically in the course of conflicts against manifest injustice. But the real significance of Sen's point that ideals are neither necessary nor sufficient is that questions of justice arise only in the context of arguments about how to reduce manifest injustices. In this understanding, to jump immediately to "transcendental perfection" might actually work to distract attention from the problematic situations in which these issues arise in the first place.[47]

The force of Sen's argument about the lack of necessity and the insufficiency of foundational accounts of justice therefore lies in the challenge it presents to the standard picture of the relation between theory and practice. Sen suggests that the transcendental approach "lands us unnecessarily in the remote exercise of looking for a black cat in a dark room that may or may not be there at all."[48] His alternative is not to embrace intuitive understandings of injustice as an alternative to theoretical reflection but to reconfigure the tasks of a theory of justice. Sen holds that if it is not possible or wise to seek after an ideal theory of justice, then it certainly is possible to assess the justice of a state of affairs by reference to other situations, without having access to a perfect theory. A concern with questions of justice, for Sen, is an inherently comparative exercise.

The emphasis on the practical situations out of which conversations about justice arise is central to Sen's comparative approach to justice. Being able to recognize wrongdoing or injustice, in this view, does not require consensus around theoretical ideas. It depends on widely shared and discoverable understandings of injustice and indignation. Sen's recommended alternative ascribes considerable importance to social science in elaborating and putting into practice comparative justice based on making judgments between feasible alternatives. Specifically, Sen argues that his own professional fields of social choice theory and welfare economics have an advantage over philosophy because they can inform the comparative analysis that is central to his view of justice as a matter of practical reason. In particular, economic analysis of this sort is able to rank alternatives without reference to an external criterion, and in ways that give due weight to people's expressed assessments and preferences.[49]

Whereas philosophy tends to seek after perfectly just social forms, Sen contends, economics allows one to rank and evaluate alternatives. The model of economics that Sen has in mind here is certainly a long way from conventional forms of neoclassical economics, which he has criticized for their inadequate appreciation of the dynamics of rationality.[50] Sen makes economics central to the comparative analysis of injustice as a way of foregrounding an idea of theory that seeks to assess situations in which injustice arises. The prominence of social science in this account stands for a commitment both to factoring in questions about the feasibility of alternative options and, crucially, to building in multiple perspectives about theories of justice while acknowledging the unequal distribution of power.

Sen's argument about the idea of justice is, I think, fundamental to the movement toward assigning priority to injustice in critical theories of democracy. Among other things, it makes clear that prioritizing injustice involves a reordering of the relationships between philosophical reasoning and social science analysis. In fact, as Eric Beerbohm argues, Sen's work can be used to distinguish two specific ways of thinking about the priority of injustice. First, this idea can refer to the "investigative priority of injustice." Here the priority of injustice means shifting attention to developing ideas that are helpful in throwing light upon how injustice is experienced, articulated, and potentially addressed. This involves developing principles that are "serviceable" in relation to the fields of decision-making where questions of justice arise. Second, it can refer to the "conceptual priority of injustice." This idea keeps us from assuming that what is at stake in Sen's argument is simply an assertion of the priority of practice over theory. Rather, what is at stake is a transformation of the very idea of the vocation of theorizing about justice. The significance of Sen's approach is that "it urges us to treat the very concept of injustice as more basic than justice, so that the latter is derived from the former."[51] This same shift of emphasis is found across a range of thinkers already discussed in this book, including Shklar and Diamond, Cavell and Wolgast, Young and Bohman.

A theme found across the work of Shklar, Diamond, and Sen, echoing a theme

discussed in chapter 6, is that the shift away from ideal theories of justice is rooted in a recognition that people are positioned differently in relation to structures of injustice: as victims, perpetrators, bystanders, beneficiaries. Sen's focus on theorizing in light of the pluralism of human life and people's differential capabilities helps us to see that attending to the animating sense of injustice does not mean simply valuing intuitions or abdicating judgment. He insists that any claim through which injustice appears as an issue needs to be examined and assessed: "We cannot be sure whether it is erroneous or well founded without some investigation." If we accept that the grammar of justice necessarily draws on partial modes of passionate utterance that give voice to the sense of injustice, then claims-making appears as the crucial practice through which injustice is expressed and worked through democratically. But "claims" here must have a double sense, of both the assertion of a harm or injury suffered and its assessment as an assertion. Accordingly, Sen's account combines a focus on attending to injustice with a commitment to democratic reasoning, a practice that he presents as combining capacities for indignation, sympathy, and reason: "Resistance to injustice typically draws on both indignation and argument. Frustration and ire can help to motivate us, and yet ultimately we have to rely, for both assessment and for effectiveness, on reasoned scrutiny to obtain a plausible and sustainable understanding of the basis of those complaints (if any) and what can be done to address the underlying problems." This insistence on the public processing of claims of injustice allows us to identify Sen's argument as a version of a critical theory of democratic justice. It presumes that while a claim arising from a sense of injustice must be the starting point for analysis, this sort of claim must in turn pass through a filter of public reasoning that draws on plural modes of expression.[52] Such a vision implies that a core aspect of critical analysis of democracy and justice is the evaluation of the qualities of public culture.

A Phenomenology of Injustice

Sen is significant for introducing the theme of the priority of injustice into post-Rawlsian traditions of analytical political philosophy. Although he acknowledges Shklar's account as a central reference point for his own project, he has relatively little to say about the affective dynamics that provoke expressions of the sense of injustice. A second strand of thinking that contributes to the conceptual prioritization of injustice does have more to say about this matter and is more explicitly concerned with the practices of publicity through which the democratic processing of claims of injustice takes place. The priority of injustice emerges in this tradition in relation to a broader embrace of the concept of recognition as the core principle for the reconstruction of critical theory.[53] Sometimes the concept of recognition is associated with a response to the rise of identity politics or the

emergence of multicultural societies, as in the work of Charles Taylor and James Tully. Sometimes it is rooted in shifts in political mobilization from the politics of distribution to the politics of recognition, as described in different ways by Jürgen Habermas and Nancy Fraser. And sometimes it is associated with an ambitious theoretical project to relocate the sources of both critique and emancipation, as in the work of Axel Honneth.

Across these varied projects, the turn to recognition has been associated with a foregrounding of a family of concepts, including domination, justification, freedom, and dignity, as the basis for a reconstructed critical theory of democratic justice. At its simplest, the idea of recognition in this broad tradition refers simply to the idea that the "crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally dialogical character."[54] More fundamentally, the turn to recognition gives priority to intersubjective understandings of the self, valorizing a broad range of forms of political expression, and accords epistemological primacy to practices of recognition over cognition. Linking these social theoretical, cultural, and philosophical strands of work is the assumption that injustice arises from deep-seated forms of misrecognition, or from the withholding of recognition. One key contribution of this turn to recognition is to foreground an analytical emphasis on the situated emergence of the sense of injustice, from which the dynamics of democratization are generated.[55] It is this emphasis that makes this strand of thought such an important resource for developing the type of ordinary inquiry into the "ethnographically emergent" dynamics of democratic politics outlined in chapter 2.

Axel Honneth provides the most explicit statement of an injustice-centered theory of democracy based on the concept of recognition. Honneth's particular model of critical theory is based on the assumption that it is not enough to find "an empirical reference point in social reality in which to base the theory's immanent justification." The real challenge is to determine whether any such reference point expresses "the unmet demands of humanity at large." In short, for Honneth critical theory seeks after "a quasi-transcendental justification of critique in the structure of social reality."[56]

Honneth's ambitious project makes recognition central to a philosophical anthropology that he has claimed is meant to contribute to a "phenomenology of experiences of social injustice."[57] The principal claim of his approach is that transformative political action is animated by felt experiences of disrespect that draw on "intuitive notions of justice violated." His theory of recognition and disrespect relies on an understanding of capitalism as a process that generates systematic social pathologies that impair conditions of self-realization. While Honneth therefore retains a focus on the connection between injustices and their systematic sources, he presents these sources not merely as pathologies that deform the capacity for human reason but as ones that undermine the very social conditions of identity formation.[58]

In developing a phenomenological approach to experiences of injustice, Hon-

neth seeks to redirect critical theory away from the discourse ethics developed by Habermas. He is also concerned to avoid the trap of the wholly negative model of critique that he ascribes to Adorno, in which critique is presumed to no longer have a place in social life because society "is no longer constituted in such a way that social anomalies, even emancipatory interests or attitudes, can be found in it."[59] Honneth's starting point is the claim that the first generation of the Frankfurt School suffered from a "sociological deficit" rather than from inadequately specified normative foundations, as Habermas proposed.[60] In Honneth's view, the founders of this tradition of thought struggled to locate the normative sources that could provide an internal justification of critique in existing social arrangements because of their continuing commitment to the concept of labor as the primary dynamic of historical change.[61]

The strong claim that Honneth makes for his social theory is that it synthesizes the two trajectories out of the productionist paradigm inherited from classical Marxism that I outlined in chapter 1. He seeks to combine the emphasis on the affective dimensions of subjectivity developed in ontologies of immanence with the Habermasian emphasis on the rationalization of different forms of action. And he follows Habermas in seeking to locate emancipatory and transformative potentials in forms of action other than labor. As we have seen, Habermas has sought to locate the conditions of progress in social interaction, drawing a sharp distinction between two forms of action: communicative and symbolic interaction on the one hand and instrumental and strategic action on the other. The distinction is primarily based on an interpretation of the pragmatics of language. Honneth holds that the normative potential that Habermas finds in the pragmatics of language needs to be relocated in social practices more broadly in the expectations of recognition that subjects bring to social interaction.

While Honneth therefore retains from Habermas the emphasis on the normative horizons built into the communicative relationships through which social life is coordinated, he decisively departs from Habermas in arguing that we should not equate "the normative potential of social interaction with the linguistic conditions of reaching understanding free from domination."[62] He recenters the normative core of critical social theory on the dynamics of recognition, which has affective and embodied aspects that the Habermasian emphasis on the cognitive dimensions of communication fails to credit. And in so doing, Honneth also restores the dynamics of conflict and contestation to the very center of a critical theory of deliberative democracy.

The concept of recognition that Honneth proposes is sourced from the history of class analysis, and draws on Hegel's account of labor as the scene of a confrontational drama of recognition and misrecognition from which self-consciousness arises.[63] Honneth locates the possibility of changing given social orders in the dynamic struggle for recognition, pluralizing this struggle for recognition beyond the social relations of work and labor to which it has been classically contained by

Marxist theory so that it includes multiple forms of disrespect. He distinguishes three forms of social recognition.[64] These are "the communicative presuppositions of a successful formation of identity" and refer in turn to "emotional concern in an intimate social relationship such as love or friendship, rights-based recognition as a morally accountable member of society and, finally, the social esteem of individual achievements and abilities."[65] In this account, Honneth is able to reaffirm that labor is a central dimension of recognition without making it into a metaphysical dynamic of revolutionary emancipation.[66] For Honneth, violations of the expectations of reciprocal recognition that are built into social interaction are at the heart of experiences of social disrespect, and in turn, under certain circumstances these forms of disrespect serve as the motivational spark for political conflicts. From this perspective, *all* politics involves struggles for recognition.

The normative source of critique in Honneth's work is therefore located in the experience of being dominated, along one axis of recognition at least, and in the sense of injustice that this experience generates. His work can be seen as an alternative to Habermas's account of how steering media shaped by system imperatives undermine the communicative background of lifeworld contexts. Honneth focuses instead on "the social causes responsible for the systematic violation of the conditions of recognition."[67] Honneth certainly remains indebted to the communicative paradigm opened by Habermas but shifts attention away from the concern with reaching understanding and toward the analysis of plural conditions of recognition. In Honneth's view, if recognition is a condition of identity, then experiences of disrespect associated with feelings of shame, anger, or indignation are fundamental to the political articulation of injustice: "The feelings of injustice that accompany forms of disrespect represent a pre-theoretical fact, on the basis of which a critique of the relations of recognition can identify its own theoretical perspective in social reality."[68]

Like other critical theorists, Honneth holds that the normative principles enabling critique cannot be assumed but need to be articulated and justified. In Honneth's case, he finds the possibility of critique and transformation in individuals' experiences of violations of the collectively shared moral expectations on which social life is really founded. His political theory of recognition "locates the core of all experiences of injustice in the withdrawal of social recognition, in the phenomena of humiliation and disrespect."[69] The sense of injustice therefore emerges from within subjective experience and is expressed in the emergence of social struggles.[70] We have already seen other versions of this idea in the work, for example, of Nancy Fraser, Iris Young, Judith Shklar, and Amartya Sen. More so than those thinkers, however, Honneth has been quite clear in arguing that one should not presume that explicit forms of social protest or political mobilization can just be treated as "empirical indicators" of the fundamental causes of domination or oppression.[71] I want to elaborate further the most important challenge that arises from this perspective, namely the problem of how to acknowledge forms

of injustice that do not allow for the articulation of felt experiences of injustice in the first place.

Moral Grammars of Injustice

Honneth's social theory is premised on the methodological procedure of "normative reconstruction." While it seeks to identify immanently justified values in social practices, it does not suppose that these are simply valid in their own terms. Instead he uses those values to further engage and assess concrete situations of injustice.[72] This form of analysis is a version of a longer standing principle of critical theory according to which critique needs to identify "an element of its own critical viewpoint within social reality."[73] Honneth finds this foothold in what he posits as "a core of expectations of recognition that all subjects bring to social interaction." He holds that social conflict emerges when these expectations are systematically undermined and flouted. For Honneth, not all features that underlie communicative interaction take linguistic form in the way supposed by Habermas's theory of communicative action, "since recognition is often tied first of all to physical gestures or mimetic forms of expression."[74] As already suggested, the principal claim of Honneth's approach is that it is felt experiences of disrespect and humiliation that animate political action. In terms that resonate with other accounts of the priority of injustice that I have discussed, Honneth asserts that emancipatory political action is not animated by ideal models of justice or even by positive emotions but by experiences of having "intuitive notions of justice violated."[75] In making this argument, Honneth appeals to Barrington Moore's argument that there is a kind of "cognitive substrate" that accounts for intuitions of injustice.[76] These do not amount to fully formed theories but are more like implicit criteria of moral disapproval. Honneth argues that there exists "a highly sensitive sensorium for injuries" that justifies moral claims of injustice.[77]

The intention behind Honneth's argument about the sources of injustice is to recenter the vocation of critical theory on better understanding "the moral feelings that accompany the experience of disrespect—shame, anger, or indignation."[78] The concept of disrespect refers to "the specific vulnerability of humans resulting from the internal interdependence of individualization and recognition."[79] Disrespect arises from the withdrawal or denial of recognition along at least one of the three formative dimensions of recognition. In this understanding, the aim of critical theory is to analyze "the moral grammar of social conflicts" as they arise from the dynamics of recognition and its denial.

The emphasis on the affective dimensions of recognition and disrespect in Honneth's work overlaps with feminist strands of critical theory developed by writers such as Benhabib, Fraser, and Young. At the same time, it is distinct from other forms of theory that valorize affect as a distinct ontological layer of life, in-

sofar as it does not remain on a single plane of immanence. Honneth insists that the affective dimensions of disrespect only have "cognitive potential." He insists, in turn, that "the injustice of disrespect does not inevitably *have to* reveal itself but merely *can*."[80] As already indicated, Honneth has observed that it is often assumed that social movements "can serve critical theory as a kind of empirically visible guiding thread for diagnosing normatively relevant problem areas."[81] Whether the cognitive potential inherent in feeling hurt or ashamed becomes a moral-political conviction depends on how the affected subject's cultural-political environment is constructed: "Only if the means of articulation of a social movement are available can the experience of disrespect become a source of motivation for acts of political resistance." Honneth's account of the experience of disrespect as the affective source of injustice is meant to inform the analysis of political mobilization and movement formation, which needs, he suggests, to be more attentive to the dynamics of "moral experience" animating social conflicts.[82] He therefore does not presume that a felt sense of injustice will necessarily be publicly articulated. Honneth is, then, concerned with accounting for the rationalities that shape the *uneven* apprehension, articulation, and acknowledgment of injustice.

Honneth's most significant contribution to the broader move to give priority to injustice in critical theories of democracy lies here, in his emphasis on the *potential* for disrespect to find expression in political movements. This emphasis allows us to make explicit the normative conundrum that lies at the heart of the conceptual affirmation of the sense of injustice as an animating dynamic of democratic politics. As we have seen in Shklar's original account of the sense of injustice, the acknowledgment that injustice is a normal feature of human life does not mean that it is always culturally expressed and politically articulated as such. For sure, both Shklar and Sen place an important emphasis on the democratic processing of claims of injustice once they are articulated. But the questions that Honneth brings explicitly into view are how and why the sense of injustice is not articulated more often and more vociferously.

In order to elaborate on the question of the selective attention given to experiences of injustice in the public sphere, it is helpful to return to the work of Barrington Moore Jr., whose account of the political dynamics of injustice is one of the recurring reference points in Honneth's own account of the politics of recognition. In his concern with understanding when anger does and does not arise as a response to the injuries of systematic exploitation and domination, Moore's revisionist account of the history of modern revolutionary politics raises a fundamental issue for any account of democratic politics that accords an analytical or conceptual priority to public expressions of injustice. In his account of the moral economy of modern rebellion, Moore suggests that political anger and public indignation arise for at least three reasons: as a response to failures of *authority* to meet "express or implied obligations"; in relation to the organization of the *division of labor* and the experience of "desirable and undesirable forms of work";

and in relation to the *distribution of goods and services*, shaped by principles of "equal and unequal sharing."[83] For Moore, these three fields give rise to different feelings of the sense of injustice that people might articulate.[84] As a comparativist, he focuses on the question of whether they might form the basis of "a recurring, pan-human, sense of injustice." Injustice, in this account, arises from "the combined requirements of innate human nature and the imperatives of social living."[85]

In Moore's narrative of the history of injustice, insurrections and uprisings tend most often to be defensively oriented, best interpreted as "attempts to revive a social contract that had been violated." He argues that actual examples of revolt and rebellion are based on felt experiences of injustice and not on grand dreams of total transformation assumed by the modern revolutionary tradition exemplified by classical Marxism. They need therefore to be situated in relation to specific grievances, or senses of injustice. Moore's account of the history of popular mobilizations against injustice retains its theoretical significance because it takes such phenomena as examples of "the emergence to the surface of latent standards."[86] Expressed in this way, Moore's account provokes the questions of how and why certain experiences of injustice find explicit expression, and how and why in turn they might help to generate new criteria of criticism and condemnation.

The significance of this analysis for appreciating Honneth's project is that Moore is centrally concerned with the absence and inhibition of anger and complaint. He is interested in understanding when anger does and does not arise in response to injuries. Understanding the process of "stifling the sense of injustice" is the challenge his work lays down for a political theory of recognition.[87] It is a challenge that tempers any straightforward valorization of explicit cries of injustice. From the perspective initiated by Moore and developed by Honneth, one of the critical questions that explicit cries of injustice raise concerns the conditions that facilitated their articulation in the first place.

The issue raised by Moore for critical theories of injustice overlaps with the account of "epistemic injustice" developed by Miranda Fricker. Also following Shklar's lead, Fricker combines strands of thought from analytical political philosophy, feminist theory, and theories of power to argue that the question of how senses of injustice find expression requires further thought and analysis. The idea of epistemic injustice not only refers to unfair distributions of knowledge or information but alerts us to questions of how epistemic practices of *testimony* ("conveying knowledge to others by telling them") and *hermeneutical practice* ("making sense of our own social experiences") are shaped by unjust relations of domination. Testimonial injustice involves the denigration of a speaker's word. Hermeneutical injustice occurs when a person is systemically disadvantaged in access to making sense and articulating his or her own experiences. In both cases, epistemic injustice "wrongs someone in their capacity as a subject of knowledge."[88]

The notion of epistemic injustice is not simply a model of silencing. It refers to the skewed distribution of believability and self-interpretability. It is more akin

to an analysis of "systematically distorted communication" than to ontological interpretations of the aporias of subject formation.[89] It can be interpreted as a more formalized version of the issue addressed by Moore, namely the stifling of the sense of injustice and its expression. Read alongside Honneth and Moore, Fricker's account suggests that the task of a critical theory of injustice is the analysis of contentious issues in terms of the relationship between the conditions of harm and injury that generate a sense of injustice and the conditions that encourage or inhibit its public articulation and acknowledgment.

Moore and Fricker help us situate the significance of Honneth's project in the broad arc of arguments about the priority of injustice. For Honneth, the tradition of critical theory needs to be renewed because it is no longer plausible to assume that critical theory is merely an expression of "a process of emancipation that is already under way." Honneth's focus on the priority of injustice reorients attention squarely to questions of how and why injustice is or is not articulated as such in the first place. He asks why those affected by injustices "do not themselves problematize or attack such moral evils." For him, the central feature of contemporary injustice is the relationship between "the existence of social injustices and the absence of any public reaction."[90] Honneth argues in turn that the most pressing question for critical theory has become one of "how a moral culture could be so constituted as to give those who are victimized, disrespected, and ostracized the individual strength to articulate their experiences in the democratic public sphere."[91]

We can see, then, that while giving priority to injustice might well focus attention on the ways in which movements articulate claims of injustice, Honneth places this concern within the broader context of needing to understand the relation between experiences of harm and injury and the selective apprehension and articulation of these experiences in the public realm. Looking for expressed claims of harm or injury of exploitation can tempt us to pass over the ways in which a central feature of structural injustice might be the effective dampening of victims' capacity to express their own experiences of harm and wrong. And this phenomenon presents a particularly acute challenge for a tradition of critique that, as we have seen previously, has come to disavow monological styles of reasoning on behalf of victims of injustice, in the name of a democratic commitment to dialogical reasoning.[92]

Orders of Justification

Honneth's account of the phenomenology of injustice succeeds in opening up the analysis of the plural rationalities out of which a sense of injustice might arise. Yet it finally subordinates this appreciation of pluralism to an image of unalienated human life.[93] Beneath the avowed concern with affective dimensions of social struggle, a strong subtext of rationalism is retained, not least in his effort to recon-

struct the notion of reification as a resource for critical analysis.[94] In this respect, Honneth's project illustrates recurring difficulties that beset political theories that are rooted in theories of recognition, including those of Habermas and Benhabib considered in the last chapter.[95] It is, of course, a staple of post-Enlightenment thought, from Freud onward, to acknowledge that the formation of personal identity inevitably, unavoidably, involves forms of misrecognition, internal division, and uncertainty. On the one hand, by elevating misrecognition and disrespect into the core violations that people can suffer, theories of recognition therefore risk positing an ideal image of unsullied ethical relations against which to judge worldly systems of power.[96] On the other hand, from the opposite direction, by elevating a historically specific narrative of master-slave dynamics into a general model of sociality, they are sometimes accused of hypostatizing the pathologies of specific social formations into quasi-transcendental principles.[97]

One response to these criticisms is to recast the political vision centered on the concept of recognition in terms of what Patchen Markell calls a "politics of acknowledgement."[98] This idea is meant to refocus attention on the cultivation of the self's appreciation of its own finitude, as the condition of responsive relationships toward others. It is an image that echoes Diamond's argument that a key requirement for justice is the acknowledgment of mutual relations of vulnerability. The problem, though, is that this form of critical elaboration only reinforces Nancy Fraser's worry that Honneth's account ends up reducing the political sociology of struggles to moral psychology. In short, critical responses to theories of recognition that replace one model of the ethical core of political life with another do not, on their own, help us to flesh out a thicker picture of the political dynamics of injustice.

It is necessary here to distinguish two aspects Honneth's use of the concept of recognition. First, he uses the idea of recognition to bring into view the affective dynamics of the emergence of the sense of injustice. However, this insight is then contained by his insistence on taking recognition and its violations as the singular, quasi-transcendental medium through which injustice is generated. The plural sources of disrespect that Honneth differentiates are all, in the final analysis, anchored on a single axis, that of recognition, the ethical core linking different rationalities of action. In contrast, Nancy Fraser's alternative treatment of recognition maintains the sense of plural sources of injustice, not least in argument with Honneth's own position. In line with other strands of thought that emphasize the plural sources of harm, injury, and wrong to which claims for justice are a response, including otherwise quite different thinkers such as Michael Walzer, Luc Boltanski, and Bruno Latour, we already have seen that Fraser places recognition alongside other axes of political dynamism. The fundamental difference in the contrasting understandings of the place of recognition in critical theory proposed by Honneth and Fraser turns on their respective modes of concept formation.[99] As already noted, Honneth's search for a quasi-transcendental moral foundation that

will enable him to assess the universal potential of situated struggles leads him to focus on recognition as the core dynamic around which power relations unfold. Fraser finds Honneth's focus on recognition too restrictive and argues that not all discontent is due to misrecognition, disrespect, or infringements of dignity. Hers is a more resolutely worldly image of the tasks of critical theory. As we have seen in chapter 6, Fraser contends that social struggles draw on a wide range of motivations. These include "resentment of unearned privilege, abhorrence of cruelty, aversion to arbitrary power, revulsion against gross disparities of income and wealth, antipathy to exploitation, dislike of supervision, and indignation at being marginalized or excluded."[100] In Fraser's view, discourses of recognition and redistribution are understood not as quasi-foundational principles but as observable *folk paradigms* of justice and injustice: "Tacitly presupposed by social movements and political actors, folk paradigms are sets of linked assumptions about the causes of and remedies for injustice."[101] She presents her own practice of critical theory as a reconstruction of these folk paradigms. Like Honneth, Fraser is keen to avoid the trap of taking the terms of social movement activism as the last word on the normative conditions of injustice and justice. For her, the compelling task is to critically engage with the models of injustice present in actually existing political contention, but without recourse to a strong metaphysical foundation for critique.

Rather than thinking of the injustices of misrecognition in terms of psychological injury, Fraser switches theoretical register to suggest that they should be conceptualized in terms of status subordination. She distinguishes between economic struggles against injustice and the cultural politics of discrimination, or class-based and status-based forms of injury. These distinctions, drawing on Marx, Weber, and Polanyi, are analytical and not ontological, since the two dimensions of action they pick out are always intertwined in practice.[102] Her use of analytical distinctions of this sort is animated by a concern to foreground "justice claims" as the central focus of a theory of justice.[103] She argues that the dimensions of economic struggle and cultural politics (or class and status) are associated with two distinct types of remedy—redistribution and recognition, respectively. Adopting the Weberian vocabulary of status enables Fraser to assert that rather than conceptualizing the "cultural" dimensions of politics by reference to concepts of identity, they should be given a thoroughly social, interactive inflection. Reconceptualizing identity-based politics in terms of status therefore recasts the debate between redistribution and recognition away from a set of opposed ontological concepts of economy versus culture, materiality versus the symbolic. This translation sustains the argument that cultural dimensions of politics are not "merely cultural" at all but constitute a dimension of injustice that is based on institutionalized patterns of evaluation—a dimension similar to Young's account of the relations between self-development and oppression.

It is here, in a "non-identitarian account of recognition," that we can locate the central innovation of Fraser's account of justice and its difference from Honneth's.

Thinking of the politics of recognition in terms of status draws into view the standing of subjects as full and equal partners of social interaction. It is a conceptual move central to Fraser's guiding norm of participatory parity, discussed in chapter 7. According to this norm, justice requires conditions that enable participants in a community "to interact with one another as *peers*."[104] The nonidentitarian, status-based account of recognition is in turn integral to Fraser's account of misrecognition as a violation of justice. For Fraser, justice "consists in the absence of socially institutionalized obstacles to participatory parity."[105] Injustice, in turn, is understood as an effect of institutionalized patterns that impair the ability of members of society to interact as peers.

In Fraser's understanding, then, evaluations of the justice of social arrangements have two dimensions: an *objective* dimension, involving assessments of the distribution of material resources to enable participatory voice; and an *intersubjective* dimension, involving the evaluation of institutionalized patterns of cultural value with reference to a norm of equal respect and equal opportunity. The objective dimension precludes systematic socioeconomic inequality. The intersubjective condition precludes systematic patterns of denigration and deprecation. The significance of this twofold understanding of justice and injustice is that, in contrast to Honneth's position, it enables Fraser to conceptualize recognition as "a remedy for injustice" rather than "the satisfaction of a generic human need."[106]

In making a series of analytical distinctions between different dimensions of injustice, Fraser encourages us to move beyond the assumption that what Habermas once called "problems of distribution" and struggles over "the grammar of forms of life" refers to two distinct types of social conflict. It is better to follow the suggestion of James Tully, for whom distribution and recognition "should be seen as *aspects* of political struggles, rather than as distinct types of struggle, and thus a style of analysis is required that has the capacity to study political struggles under both aspects." In a variation on the idea of clarifying the "structural characteristics" of conflicts that I proposed in chapter 5, Tully suggests using a "bifocal form of critical analysis," one "that clarifies empirically and normatively the recognition and distribution aspects of contemporary struggles and their interaction without reducing one to the other." Furthermore, Tully argues, "Struggles over recognition, like struggles over distribution, are not amenable to definitive solutions beyond further democratic disagreement, dispute, negotiation, amendment, implementation, review, and further disagreement." In contrast to Honneth's account, for Tully recognition is not a deep underlying telos of interaction. It is instead seen as a "a partial, provisional, mutual, and human-all-too-human part of continuous processes of democratic activity in which citizens struggle to change their rules of mutual recognition as they change themselves."[107]

Tully's sense of recognition as a dimension of ongoing democratic interaction helps us define more clearly the significance of Fraser's difference of opinion with Honneth over the value of the concept of recognition. Honneth remains firmly

committed to embedding his account of democracy in a strong ethical vision of the good life in a way that Fraser's account eschews. She focuses on status subordination rather than infringements of fundamental features of personal identity and therefore provides a more ordinarily political sense of injustice, rooted in the claim that the norm of participatory parity is present in various folk paradigms of justice. Fraser's view implies that claims against injustice arise not so much as expressions of the violation of fundamental human needs for reciprocal recognition but rather from the denial of equal participation in the collective life of political communities. Honneth's strongly ethical model of disrespectful violations presents a rather abstract, featureless picture of the scenes of recognition in which selves and others confront one another. By contrast, Fraser's account of the framing of justice claims suggests that the enactment of those scenes is, in fact, highly variable. And furthermore, as I argued at the end of chapter 6, one of the most important implications of post-Habermasian theories of deliberative democracy is that these scenes are also necessarily partial and situated. In short, the sense of injustice necessarily arises from a feeling of the violations of salient expectations of the conferral of respect, the provision of material resources, or inclusion in shared activities.

Across the different positions represented by Honneth, Fraser, Tully, and other theorists of the politics of recognition, the shared emphasis is to orient the critical theory of democracy toward the analysis of the plural rationalities of action that motivate claims of injustice. The prioritization of injustice rests on a commitment to the idea that harms, violations, wrongs are experienced, felt, articulated, and assessed in situations of intersubjective interaction. It follows that justice is, in a fundamental sense, a public phenomenon.

The clearest articulation of the priority of injustice as an account of the dynamics of democratic public life is provided in Rainer Forst's inflection of critical theory. Forst elaborates on the conceptual priority of injustice by reference to a norm of justice as the "right to justification." Forst understands "society as an ensemble of practices of justification."[108] This idea resonates with the pragmatist sociology of critical practices associated with Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot, and others, which draws attention to the coordinating and problematizing role of various "orders of worth" operating in a wide range of fields of social action.[109] Forst posits broadly encompassing "normative orders" that configure how demands for justification are articulated in different fields of action. He makes the justifiability of social relations the core problem for a theory of justice, and he insists that addressing this issue is not a matter for arbitration by academic reason alone.

Forst argues that a critical theory of justice must start from an acknowledgment of the "fact of multiple domination," a scenario that for him, as for James Bohman, is revealed by attending to the dynamics of transnational political processes.[110] As with other thinkers I have already considered, the meaning of justice for Forst is primarily defined in terms of opposition to arbitrary rule. Demands

for justice, that is, demands to eliminate domination, are thereby made the central analytical concern for critical theory. But for him, the meaning of justice and domination is defined quite tightly around a norm of reason-giving as a practice of justification. Forst defines power as "the ability to order and influence, to occupy, and, in extreme cases, to dominate the space of reasons for others, that is, to determine the limits of what can be said and thought and, above all, of what is accepted and acceptable, of what is justified."[111] This formulation might well call to mind Rancière's account of the partition of the sensible, suggesting that there is a substrate of felt experience waiting to be expressed in moments when the repressions of ordered social life can be interrupted. But crucially, the concept of "the space of reasons" that Forst invokes here does not refer to the fixing in place of individuals' subjective dispositions. It does not suppose at all that experience is a function of the isolated and purely subjective apprehension of reality, which may or may not then be expressed. Rather, the space of reasons refers to the structuring of the intersubjective horizons of action and perception.[112] This concept does not present action as a passive, representational medium of perception but supposes that perception and action are interdependent, so that reason is understood as thoroughly bound up with the pragmatics of action. Seen in this light, Forst's understanding of power is not simply an account of the discursive constructions of experience or ideological constrictions on expression. It is an account of how fields of social action are coordinated and problematized through shared and contested expectations of justifiability.

A number of critical theorists, as we have seen, propose that justice arises from demands for the eradication of domination. Forst interprets this theme in terms of a norm of the equal respect and dignity owed to people as agents of justification. His account of democratic justice rests on an understanding of the political as "a specific practice of justification."[113] His view of justice as justification makes explicit the link between injustice and claims-making around ideas of all-affectedness that was discussed in detail in chapters 6 and 7. According to the idea of justice as justification, "All social relations to which one is subject and that can be changed by political action are to be justified reciprocally and generally to all those affected in a relevant way—be they economic relations or relations of political authority." We see here how Forst effectively translates the ideals of reciprocity and generality found in other strands of critical theory into a principle of the equal right to demand justifications and to initiate controversy and discord. He argues that critical theory "calls not only for justifiable social relations, but for a practice of justification."[114] A fundamental aspect of Forst's understanding of justice is that questions of justification are always posed in concrete situations "by historical agents who are no longer satisfied with the justifications for the normative order to which they are subjected." In short, Forst effectively transforms the all affected principle into an expansive, stringent theory of a right to justification, one rooted in a "phenomenology of dignity." He holds that citizens should be seen as "endowed

with a right to justification of all actions or norms that affect them in morally relevant ways."[115] And in turn, citizens bear a duty to provide such justifications when called upon to do so.

Forst's account of justice as justifiability underscores how the conceptual shift to prioritizing injustice reorients attention toward analyzing the articulation and assessment of demands for justice: "The demand for justice is an emancipatory demand, which is described with terms like fairness, reciprocity, symmetry, equality, or balance: putting it reflexively, its basis is the claim to be respected as an agent of justification, that is, in one's dignity as a being who can ask for and give justifications."[116] Forst here provides a clear statement of the way in which the priority of injustice in critical theories of democracy is associated with a reassertion of an idea of public life as a field in which a variety of genres are called upon to negotiate interactions by giving and sharing reasons. This emphasis on the public dynamics of experiences, articulations, and responses to injustice links the different strands of thought discussed in this chapter—from Shklar's account of the sense of injustice to Sen's account of the imperative to engage with manifest injustices and on to Honneth's account of the embodied sources of felt violations of recognition and Fraser's account of status subordination. In the work of each of these thinkers, there is an implicit sense that *doing justice* to *claims of injustice* requires placing them in the space of reasons, that is, treating them as part of extended practices of justification. It is in Forst's work that we see this sense most explicitly formulated. Forst makes quite clear the idea of justice claims as claims *against domination* by formulating them as claims *for justification* of social relations.

Locating Injustice in the Space of Reasons

I have sought throughout part 3 to reconstruct an emergent paradigm of political thought that prioritizes injustice in the development of a critical theory of democracy. It is a diverse range of thought, to be sure, marked by a commitment to finding new ways of synthesizing egalitarian frameworks of justice with particular understandings of *freedom as power* and *non-domination* as core democratic values. The orientation to the priority of injustice involves focusing critical attention on processes of claims-making and the contingent emergence of a sense of injustice.

Chapter 6 identified in the conceptual transformation of the all affected idea a recurring emphasis on the importance of practices of claims-making to democratic politics. Chapter 7 developed this emphasis further by identifying the specific form of harm on which critical theories of democracy are increasingly focused—the wielding of arbitrary power, or domination. Building on this emphasis on democracy as a means of mitigating and redressing domination, this chapter has elaborated on the significance of giving conceptual priority to injustice when developing critical inquiry into democratic politics.

This chapter has bought together the twin emphases on claims-making (discussed in chapter 6) and the value of non-domination (discussed in chapter 7), tracing how both aspects inform a more fundamental shift in the way in which concepts of justice and injustice are arranged. Looping back to the argument in chapter 2 on how best to think of criteria, this chapter has outlined a conceptual reordering in which the sense of injustice is accorded primacy over ideals of justice. This conceptual reordering depends on the idea that the practical and normative force of democracy lies in the public processing of claims of injustice and demands for justice.

The conceptual prioritization of injustice repositions the task of critical inquiry in a more modest relation to the actual dynamics of political disputes. It does so in two ways.

First, while critical theorists certainly do not assume that political action somehow requires normative foundations to get off the ground, they do assume that critical reflection can reconstruct and elaborate the intuitions animating various conflicts in order to open them up to forms of public reasoning and assessment. This means that theories of democracy that prioritize injustice inevitably have an ambivalent relation to activist politics. Radical scholarship has strong elective affinities with movements struggling for justice, but it also is consistently wary of the universalizing dimensions of normative political reasoning. David Harvey, for example, suggests that normative issues can be approached in three ways: through philosophical reflection; through the development of frameworks of basic human needs; or through alignment with the ferment of social movements, the route he recommends.[117]

My contention here is that the prioritization of injustice in critical theories of democracy complicates the model of radical scholarship as voluntarily electing to align itself with the aims and ambitions of social movements or radical political activism. This perspective recognizes social movement mobilizations as crucial to the apprehension and expression of the sense of injustice but does not accord them unquestioned empirical authority or normative validity. While prioritizing injustice focuses attention on the ways in which activist movements articulate justice claims, it places this concern within a broader analysis of the relation between the phenomenology of harm and injury and the selective articulation of these experiences in the public realm.

Prioritizing injustice therefore implies a more hesitant relationship toward movement politics than is often admitted in traditions of critical thought. It is here that the second aspect of the repositioning of critical inquiry can be seen. The prioritization of injustice involves a fundamental reorientation in the vocation theory itself, toward the analysis of justice claims that arise from the situated emergence of the sense of injustice. The importance of the critical theory tradition is not just that it extends the concerns of ideal theories of justice beyond a narrow conceptual focus on the distribution of a range of public goods restricted to

legal and political rights, nor that it introduces deeper understandings of power or social relations to those traditions. The conceptual prioritization of injustice represents a more fundamental challenge to the generic model of theory at work in both liberal and radical accounts of justice. In this challenge, the containment of discussions of justice within overly prescriptive styles of normative reasoning is placed under scrutiny. I have dwelt on how feminist thinkers, including Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, and Iris Marion Young, all insist that principles of justice must be theorized dialogically rather than deduced either from prior models of perfect justice or from social scientific accounts of the causal implication of people into extended chains of actions and consequences. In these strands of thought, the ideal of impartial universalistic reason is replaced by a dialogic notion of pluralistic forms of expression, one in which embodied, partial, passionate modes of expression are made central to forms of engagement that acknowledge the concrete experiences of other subjects. In short, the prioritization of injustice recenters inquiry into democratic politics on the shared apprehension of injuries and harms such as exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, violence, and cultural denigration.[118]

The emphasis on the sense of injustice as the animating dynamic of democratic politics, with the implication that explanatory and normative priority should be given to the expressions of wrong articulated by victims of domination, exploitation, or oppression, might well resonate among critically inclined scholars. The valorization of claims of injustice seems also to open the way for the view that all claims of injustice should be accorded equal value. Certainly arguments for the priority of injustice are intimately related to arguments about the primacy of the passions in reasoning about moral action. And the emphasis on forms of passionate expression associated with arguments for the priority of injustice might well seem to make judgment a purely subjective matter.[119]

But isn't it here that critical thought needs to be able to provide robust, universal principles that can be applied to determine genuine from spurious claims? As I have already argued, to suppose that the ability to apply universally valid principles is essential to the task of critique is to get the picture of judgment the wrong way around. Here we might recall Iris Marion Young's observation in response to the presumption that being able to call a situation unjust must involve at least an implicit deduction from generally agreed principles: "This is not in fact how appeals to justice function in actual political life." Injustice, Young argues, is not recognized by applying universal principles to actual situations. Rather, ideas of justice appear as the result of the articulation of senses of injustice: "Appeals to justice and claims of injustice are not a result, they do not reflect an agreement; they are rather the starting point of a certain kind of *debate*. To invoke the language of justice and injustice is to make a *claim*, a claim that we together have obligations of certain sorts to one another."[120] This is a fully political image of the

politics of justice and injustice. It does not suppose that transcendent principles, not even ones rooted in a phenomenology of recognition, could finally determine the content of justice. This is not because all theory is inevitably nonideal in its application but because this view belongs to the tradition of critical theory. Which is to say that Young does not suppose that determinations of injustice are either objectively definable or subjectively capricious, but argues instead that they are intersubjective achievements—that their value depends on and shapes the quality of democratic politics.

Young helps us see that what is at issue in according conceptual priority to injustice in theories of democracy is not an appeal to the political virtue of movements or activism, nor is it a problem of the contrast between foundational universalism and relativistic particularism. What is at issue are different ways of thinking about how universal criteria actually work—as authoritative references to impartial principles or as situated claims for acknowledgment, inclusion, and recognition that seek to enact public life in more democratic ways.

To fully grasp the significance of the conceptual shift toward prioritizing injustice—to fully grasp the significance of saying that the discourse of democratic justice is first and foremost a register of claims-making—we need to appreciate the double significance of the idea of "claims" at work in arguments about the priority of injustice. The idea of claims of injustice implies that matters of justice arise in contexts in which existing patterns of power are contested through the voicing of objections of one form or another in the register of justice. In this sense claims are *asserted* against manifest injustice. But the idea of claims also refers to the notion that these claims are *assertions* and therefore should be subject to a democratic test by being passed through the medium of public debate. By saying that claims of injustice and claims for justice are assertions, I simply mean to draw out the sense in which critical theories of democracy present these matters as subject to continuous, conjoint, intersubjectively anchored inquiry.[121]

The double sense of claims of injustice as assertions is an indication of how the prioritization of injustice seeks to hold together two equally compelling imperatives of a democratic style of critical theory. First, it reflects a long-standing commitment to giving explanatory and normative priority to the expressions of wrong articulated by those who are subject to domination. For example, Enrique Dussel argues that the primary motivating force of critical theory is to do justice to the perspective of victims. Dussel's own philosophy of liberation is premised on the idea that political action involves the transformation of the different experiences implied by the multiplicity of modes of victimhood through intersubjectively mediated discourses of solidarity. Part of this process, he insists, involves having to recognize and negotiate different aspects of affectedness through which people might be subjected to systems of domination.[122] Dussel therefore also helps us grasp the significance of the second imperative to which the priority of injus-

tice is a response, which is the commitment to the communicative engagement of participants in the determination of interests, needs, and values. This means that claims of injustice are presumed to be subject to judgment and evaluation through a broadly inclusive public process of deliberation in which the validity of those claims is scrutinized.

To be clear, the emphasis on the second dimension of claims-making, the democratic processing of claims of injustice stressed by Dussel, but also by Habermas, Forst, Sen, Shklar, is not born out of a skeptical disposition. Agreeing on whether claims of justice are warranted is not a matter of determining epistemological certainty. The emphasis on the democratic processing of claims is shaped by two commitments we have already addressed. First, we have seen that the priority of injustice cannot be made equivalent to a simple affirmation of the transparently objective fact of injustice without the risk of passing over the ways in which a fundamental feature of structural injustice might be the stifling of victims' capacity to express their own experiences of harm and wrong. Second, and related to this issue, there is both intrinsic and instrumental value in attending to the specific expressions of harm and injury that animate a felt sense of injustice: doing so allows us to hear the precise form of wrong that is being objected to and it facilitates acknowledgement, that is, it allows us to formulate an appropriate response or course of action.

We should avoid the temptation of thinking that following the train of thought that rejects ideal theories of injustice in favor of attending to expressions of injustice is a just matter of declaring the priority of practice over theory. What is in fact at stake in giving conceptual priority to injustice is a shift in the understanding of the vocation of critical theory. The shared understanding across the pluralist tradition from which the theme of the priority of injustice emerges is that what makes a state of affairs appear unjust—to those immediately on the receiving end of domination and to those called on to act in response—is not a reference to a prior construction of what would count as a properly just arrangement. What is involved instead is an affirmation that practices of justification are central to the identification of injustice *as* injustice. Accepting that this is the case does not cast us adrift from the safety accorded by clinging to universal principles and into the depths of relativism. Rather than a rock-solid theory of justice, what is needed to discern what is just and unjust is critical attention to the conditions of dialogue and response through which manifest injustices are recognized and addressed (or not).

The argument in favor of according injustice primacy over ideals of justice therefore transforms the value ascribed to theory. It requires giving up on the idea that universalism is menaced by relativism and particularity and thinking instead about the different registers in which claims to universality are articulated. It also requires giving up on the scholastic presumption that it is possible to arrive at monological determinations of justice against which worldly inequities can be

revealed and condemned. It requires, in short, taking up again the challenge of thinking democratically about justice once presented by David Harvey, in his recommendation to pursue "a just distribution justly arrived at."[123] The unfulfilled potential for working through the dual aspects of Harvey's formula calls for a recentering of analytical and conceptual attention on the fragile dynamics of democratic contention. Which is to say that it requires attending to the relations between the situated emergence of felt senses of injustice and the processing of these claims through practices of public reasoning.

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CONCLUSION

Profane Democratization

I have sought in this book to trace divergent ways of conceptualizing the sources of transformative political action in radical thought. In so doing, I have tried to draw into view how radical theorists' interest in democracy is not simply driven by a concern with substantive or procedural questions of governance, participation, resistance, or rule. Democracy arises in a broad range of Left theory as a worry about the status, the legitimacy even, of the vocation of critique itself. What is at stake in assessing different theories is not simply whether they successfully identify the possibility of social transformation, perhaps by illustrating the historical formation of current patterns of power and privilege or by demonstrating the ontological contingency on which solid foundations rest. The issue is not even whether radical theories can identify plausible agents of transformation on the basis of these systematic explanations and new ontologies, perhaps in the form of "a movement of movements" or elusive figures of "the multitude." Rather than supposing that the only response to the critique of false universalizing and unjustifiable foundationalism in liberal political theories is the embrace of one form or other of revisionary metaphysics—in a kind of flight from the ordinary—we should instead attend more closely to the conceptual prioritization of injustice in critical theories of democracy. From this perspective, critical assessment turns on the question of whether the *plausibility* of alternative visions can be matched with an account of the *validity*, or the justifiability, of both the means and ends pictured in those alternatives.

One result of approaching radical political thought in terms of the justificatory dilemma is a much more ordinary view of the purposes of critical theory. In the wake of the vanished image of organic intellectuals analyzing conjunctures and diagnosing strategic possibilities while deferring decisions on courses of action to the Party or the Movement, radical theories are thrown back on different pictures of the public spaces in which criticism circulates in positing their purchase on the world. To a perhaps surprising degree, radical political theories often hold fast to an epistemic understanding of the dynamics of human action. Too often we are

invited to imagine that social life hangs together, and must be transformed, by "getting at" people's beliefs, desires, and feelings without their knowing it. The view of critique as a process of denaturalization and defamiliarization is a legacy of theorizing about the ontological conditions of *subject formation* rather than thinking about the rationalities of *action*. The revelatory model of demystification held to by classical Marxism, and much modernist thought more broadly, is easily transposed into cultural theories that seek to lay bare the devices of people's own subjection, while ontologies of the political posit the immanent energies of mute subversion always potentially waiting to disrupt settled patterns of identification. Theoretical arguments that proclaim ontological contingency and multiplicity all too happily embrace an ethos of revelatory education and aesthetic disruption.

My contention is that theoretical arguments elaborating on plural rationalities of action, of the sort discussed in part 3, are informed by a more ordinary understanding of critique. In this strand of thought, critical theory is just one voice in an open space of plural disputes about the justifiability of social relations and institutional forms. The task of critique, in this view, is to interpret the shared and contested meanings found in the activities in which we partake, with a view not to uncover hidden meanings or subterfuge but to remind us of things we perhaps already knew.

The premise of my account of critical theory is that power is not only a pervasive feature of life but also a crucial resource for making things better. This view is essential for any meaningfully democratic social theory, not least because it should lead us to be constantly aware of the political evils done in the name of power as well as those associated with wielding power in the name of the people, the rule of law, revolution, or indeed, democracy itself. To understand the potentials and pitfalls of democratic politics, we do not need refined theories of ideal justice. Nor do we need to perfect our understanding of the political as a distinct ontological layer or as a dimension of human affairs withdrawn from all but the most extraordinary events or refined sensibilities. We would do well to follow Raymond Geuss's recommendation that theorizing about "real politics" needs to avoid the temptation to search for "an antecedent ontological specification of a distinct domain called 'politics.'" To think about politics "is to think about agency, power, and interests and the relations among these." Understood in this way, political analysis is guided by the question of "Who <does> what to whom for whose benefit."[1]

A resolutely realist understanding of politics of this sort helps to deflate the importance ascribed to concepts of antagonism, enmity, and hostility in radical theories of democracy without falling into the traps of ethical idealism—it is a view premised, after all, on the vices as well as the virtues to which people are prone. Politics involves relations of conflict, rule, contestation, decision, enmity, and interest as well as compromise, bargaining, deal making, agreement, reconciliation, and sometimes even consensus. It has to do with the unequal distribution of scarce material resources and non-material benefits. It has to do with scheming,

calculating, and expediency. These are common enough usages, though hardly exhaustive. One or more of these usages are at work when we use the adjective "political" to describe some activity, behavior, or situation. Saying something is "political" no more implies the existence of an ontological substance that one should call "the political" than does describing someone's actions as having unconscious motivations require one to suppose the existence of anything like the unconscious.

I have outlined the style of reasoning appropriate to thinking of politics in this more ordinary way in part 1, "Democracy and Critique." There I focused on the question of how to theorize about the force of concepts such as democracy that combine an element of universalism with an observable variability of meaning and form. I also elaborated on an account of concept use as an ordinary dimension of going on in the world. The emphasis of these first two chapters was on the situational emergence of democratic politics. Parts 2 and 3 engaged with a range of intellectual traditions with this emphasis in mind, seeking to identify strands of thought best able to assist in further understanding the dynamics through which political energies emerge as an ordinary dimension of social life.

In part 2, "Rationalities of the Political," I focused on the relationship between action and its conditions in theoretical traditions that search for the autonomy of politics in ontological qualities of the world. I identified a genre of theory characterized by a shared picture of the world as being shaped by forces of stabilization and disruption. Locating the political in the metaphysical space between contingency and fixity, this genre limits the dynamics of political emergence to dramatic forms of insurrection or rare events of constitution.

I have argued that this genre of theory is poorly suited to appreciating the ordinary qualities of the political, in the sense of the ordinary introduced in chapter 2. There I elaborated on Stanley Cavell's idea of the ordinary, which is oriented by an affirmation of skepticism not as something to be guarded against or expelled but as a constant possibility of life.[2] The ordinary, from this perspective, appears not as a world of settled common sense, unreflective habit, or taken-for-granted obviousness. Instead, the possibility that the world as we know it is not all that it may seem is an ever-present condition of action. When Cavell says "ordinary," he is referring to the constitutive "vulnerability to doubt" of our relations to the world.[3] This vulnerability is an integral feature of action, and learning to negotiate it is a pervasive condition of our routines and habits.

I have used the idea of the ordinary to suggest that, ironically perhaps, postfoundational ontologies of the political might well remain trapped in an epistemological way of thinking about political action. In ontologized ways of thinking, the discovery that such action has no secure foundations, either in a science of society or a philosophy of the subject, is interpreted as a confirmation of the pure contingency of action in the world. There is, then, a scholastic blind spot that underwrites the distinctive spatialization of the political in terms of openings and

closures, contingency and necessity, fluidity and fixity.[4] In contrast to this way of elaborating on the meaning of the political, I identified a strand of thought that uses the politics/political distinction in a more analytical or heuristic way, to open up new ways of investigating the conditions of political action.

Building on this heuristic interpretation of the difference between politics and the political, part 3, "Phenomenologies of Injustice," reconstructed strands of critical theory that respond to the challenges of thinking about political life in a way that is more respectful of the emphasis on the ordinary noted above. Across the range of thinkers discussed in the final part of this book, one finds that the critique of overly rationalistic accounts of political action does not have to be associated with a search for deeper and deeper ontological sources of political dynamism. It can just as easily inform a conceptual pluralization of the types of action through which political life is animated. Taking this path involves reordering the relationships between justice and injustice in theories of democracy. This reordering is framed in part by the use of a set of geographical tropes to position the revival of republican political ideas at the core of a critical theory of democratic politics, one that gives normative precedence to values of freedom as non-domination or to the even stronger value of freedom as power. The conceptual reorientation around themes of injustice and non-domination should be, I would say, central to further development of the form of democratic inquiry outlined in chapter 2, one in which analytical attention focuses on the emergence and processing of claims against situated experiences of harm, injury, or wrong.

Emergent Spaces of Democracy

My discussion of different strands of political thought in the preceding chapters has been shaped by a concern to theorize democracy not as an ideal form but as an object of inquiry that has a variable historical geography of emergence and consolidation, extension and crisis, decline and rebirth. In a sense, then, this book is intended as a kind of prolegomena to democratic inquiry in a geographical spirit. Central to the project is the focus on the generation of democratic energies through situated claims for redress, redistribution, or recognition (and the importance of being able to judge the substantive difference between such claims). I have argued that the conceptual transformation of the concept of all affected interests is central to foregrounding contestation in the ongoing evolution of critical theory as a tradition of radical democratic thought. We have seen how the principle of all-affectedness is translated into a medium for the articulation of oppositional claims against oppression and domination. We have in turn seen how the development of the notion of affectedness as a register of claims-making leads to the identification of a particular form of harm—the arbitrary subjection to the will of others, or domination—as the central object of a critical theory of democracy.

And we have seen how these conceptual shifts are associated with a reorientation of the very idea of what critical theory is good for, toward critical engagement with the claims through which the sense of injustice is publicly enacted, problematized, and processed.

My account of the translation of all-affectedness into the registers of action theory challenges the methodological globalism through which much of the tradition of critical theory has engaged with issues of domination and injustice. It does so by drawing into focus the importance of the problematic situations out of which democratic political agency emerges.[5] In turn, this implies a "topological" understanding of political action, if all we mean by this is an understanding that politics is a worldly practice that emerges from emplaced contexts of action.[6] Or to put it another way, politics is always *about* something. I have argued that the transformation of the all affected principle and the prioritization of injustice in critical theories of democracy require us to do more than simply track the deterritorializing effects of globalized chains of cause and consequence. It requires us also to attend to the geographies of the situated emergence and imaginative reach of issues, along two dimensions. First, thinking of affectedness as a register of *contestatory* claims-making requires paying attention to the settings out of which felt senses of injustice emerge and are articulated as political claims. Second, thinking of affectedness as a phenomenon ascribed in situated communicative contexts requires an analysis of the milieus in which the capacity to "learn to be affected" and to develop solidaristic identifications is worked up and sustained. In both respects, the cultivation of what we might call "context-transcendent" capacities to imagine, judge, and act democratically is understood to depend on necessarily partial conditions of social integration.

The prioritization of injustice that is associated with the translation of the all affected interest idea into a deliberative norm therefore suggests an analysis of the variable geographies though which democratic politics is articulated. Thinking of democracy in terms of claims-making might, at first sight, seem to support a view that privileges accessibility to classically defined public spaces. It seems to invite us to think of claims as being expressed in particular ways, through protest, demonstrations, or other forms of more-or-less spectacular presence in physical space. There is, however, more to claims-making than practices of assembly, dissent, encounter, and protest. I argued in chapter 8 that the idea of claims-making needs to be extended beyond the mere expression of a demand to encompass the processes by which claims are evaluated, adjusted, acted on, and accorded recognition legitimacy. The focus on claims-making therefore requires us to think about the ways in which the spatialities of democratic politics might extend beyond the preference for models of assembly to include the articulation of spaces of mobilization, demands, deliberations, compromises, deal making, decisions, delivery, accountability, and revision.[7]

The sort of geographical imagination one needs to fully elaborate on the view

of democratic politics that follows from prioritizing injustice would, therefore, focus not on spaces of co-presence but on spaces of circulation, articulation, and re-presentation. Rather than seeking to pin down the correct ontological view of space or spatiality, democratic inquiry requires us to think of spatial concepts heuristically, in ways that allow us to further explore the threefold sense of affectedness that I elaborated in chapter 6.[8] We might, then, explore further how some aspect of being affected in a causal sense can be illuminated by explanatory concepts associated with theorizing the production of space, the urbanization of capital, or accumulation by dispossession; we might investigate how the aspect of learning to be affected can be informed by interpretative traditions of thought concerned with concepts of place, landscape, and public space; and we might examine how the aspect of acting or responding, of affecting, can be clarified by reference to traditions of thought concerned with issues of governance, scale, and territory.[9]

This way of thinking about spatial concepts is consistent with the approach to theorizing democracy geographically that I have articulated in this book. Democracy is not a static concept with a singular meaning or one whose sense can be derived through ontological reasoning. As a prolegomenon to democratic inquiry, the theoretical underlaboring undertaken in this book therefore directs attention to three analytical protocols.

First is the principle of the *charitable* interpretation of the imaginary geographies of democratic theory. By invoking this principle I mean to distance myself from the form of scholastic chauvinism that has come to often characterize traditions of critical spatial theory. Rather than presume that there is one, single, correct spatial ontology that serves as the master vocabulary against which all other spatial grammars must be judged inadequate, I have approached the use of spatial figures in various traditions of political thought with the intention of maximizing understanding. I have sought to provide an interpretation of the conceptual problems that are at stake in the recourse to concepts of insides and outsides, extension, and closure. We should be sensitive to the analytical worries that political thinkers might be trying to articulate when they make use of what, from the perspective of critical spatial theory, appear to be rather simplistic or naïve understandings of globalization, the transnational, or deterritorialization. For example, discussions of geographical boundaries can address the problem of how to translate broadly diffused processes of opinion formation into legitimate and effective forms of will formation, or stable geographical objects such as the nation can serve as a frame through which to reflect on the qualities of social solidarity associated with democracy. In focusing on the spatial tropology at work in theoretical discussions of such concepts as political representation or the public sphere, the default position should not be to call these discussions into question simply because they do not utilize the same theoretical understandings of spatiality that are favored in critical spatial theory.

Second, democratic inquiry involves a *diagnostic* investigation of the types of influence to which particular patterns of the exercise of power are susceptible. This follows from the argument, outlined in chapter 5 in particular, that attention should be paid to the structural characteristics, as Hirschman called them, of issues around which political conflict emerge. An analysis of the means of coordination through which different fields of practice are reproduced should focus on the forms of contention and grievance they generate and the type of democratic politics that might be expected to emerge around them.

Third, democratic inquiry of the sort envisaged here would involve a *supplementary* analysis of the ordinary deployment of normative concepts in political conflict. Chapter 2 outlined an approach to understanding the contestation of democratic norms in historical-geographical contexts of non-paradigmatic application. Such an analysis would help to disclose what values are invoked and what harms or concerns motivate different actors when recourse is made to the discourses and devices of democracy. Such a style of analysis would be sensitive to context but also attuned to processes of translation through which democratic practices travel; it would be attentive to different understandings of what democracy is good for; it would be concerned with understanding the articulation of democratic practices with non-democratic practices such as bureaucracy, violence, or patriarchy; and it would be concerned with the ways in which new meanings accrete to democracy in processes of contested application.

These three protocols of democratic inquiry reflect a commitment to theorizing democracy ordinarily, that is, to appreciating the ways in which democracy's meanings emerge in the course of political action. This commitment does not abandon the normative dimension of democratic theory but recognizes that democratic politics collects a series of different values, including liberty and equality, participation and publicity, accountability and accommodation, contestation and consensus, responsibility and representation. Critical analysis should focus on how particular claims to instantiate democracy advance certain values over others. Judgment of the validity of any such combination will, no doubt, remain open to further contestation. That is why this sort of inquiry should also enact a commitment to giving reasons for preferring certain combinations of values over others.

Democracy is a form of politics, not a substitute for it. To paraphrase and embellish Harold Lasswell, politics has to do with who gets what, when, how (and where).[10] Democratic politics is a form of politics in which these questions are folded into ordinary judgments about whether people should get what they get, when and where they get it, and how they get it. A program of democratic inquiry therefore needs to be able to address the normative force of democratic values in practical situations. Some democratic theories are better equipped to do this than others, and so are some social theories. In order to fully cash out the potential of the living tradition of critical theory as a tradition of radical democratic thought, it

is necessary to disrupt received conventions of theory formation, especially those conventions that determine that normative theories can serve only as ideals and those that ensure that open reflection on normative values is always subordinated to ontological assertion or messianic declaration. After all, the horizon of democratic politics is not formed by the eschatological hope for a wholly different future. Rather, we should join with Habermas and affirm that faith in democracy has its origins in "the profane expectation that our praxis in the world, despite everything, may help to bring about a shift towards a better state of things."[11]

NOTES

INTRODUCTION. Arguing with Theory

1. See A. Anderson, 2006.
2. See Hacking, 2002, pp. 178–99.
3. See Pettit, 1999.
4. Sinfield, 1994, p. 22.
5. See Bérubé, 2006, pp. 313–18; see also Felski, 2015.
6. I. Young, 1990, p. 5.
7. I. Young, 1990a, p. 5.
8. LaCapra, 2004, p. 500.
9. See M. Low, 1999; M. Low, 2004.
10. Sparke, 2005.
11. Dikeç, 2015.
12. See Cavell, 1979, pp. 76–78.
13. See also Bonura, 2012.
14. See Davidson, 1984, p. 27.
15. Dewey, 1986.
16. See Barnett and Bridge, 2013; see also Bohman, 1999.
17. See Glendinning, 2006.
18. See, for example, Bennington, 2001.
19. See, for example, R. Bernstein, 1976.
20. Marcuse, 1955, pp. 251–57; see also Dubiel, 1985.
21. Dosse, 1999.
22. See Habermas, 1985a, p. 181
23. Critchley, 2000.
24. Ibid., p. 457.
25. Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 131.
26. See Butler, 2013.
27. Butler's work is only the latest in a long line of thinking about the necessary presencing of political action in physical space. See also J. Parkinson, 2012. For a consideration of why the observable relationship between political action and specific spatial sites actually

ruins any claim about the privileged relations between space and politics, see Barnett, 2008a.

28. Barthes, 1981, p. 218.
29. See Fligstein and McAdam, 2012, pp. 83–86.
30. See Joas and Knöbl, 2009.
31. See, for example, Howard, 2002; Breckman, 2013.
32. See Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006; Sayer, 2011.
33. See Tully, 2008a.
34. McNay, 2014.
35. Heller, 1991.
36. Ibid., p. 330.
37. Ibid.
38. Ricoeur, 1965.
39. Ibid., p. 248.
40. See ibid., pp. 261–62.

CHAPTER 1. An Awareness of Politics

1. Pettit, 2006, p. 301.
2. Ober, 2008, 3–9.
3. Castoriadis, 1987, p. 118.
4. Macpherson, 1966, p. 5. See also Roberts, 1997.
5. Rancière, 2004a, p. 5.
6. See Dussel, 2013, pp. 42–43.
7. Heidegger, 1992, p. 43.
8. See Sherratt, 2014; Elden, 2006.
9. Arendt, 1997, p. 14.
10. See Arendt, 2007, pp. 941–54.
11. Ibid., p. 953.
12. See Cassin, 2014b.
13. Keane, 2009.
14. Hardwick and Harrison, 2013.
15. See Hansen, 2005; Rhodes, 2003; Potter, 2004.
16. See Lianeri, 2000.
17. Leonard, 2005.
18. Vernant, 1984.
19. See Vernant, 2000. See also Derrida, 2005b, pp. 22–23.
20. Veyne, 2005.
21. Lianeri, 2013.
22. Lianeri, 2010, p. 132.
23. See Rancière, 2006a, p. 41.
24. Saar, 2010, p. 11.
25. See also Hanssen, 2000.
26. Saar, 2010, p. 15.
27. See G. Parkinson, 2000, p. 173.
28. Saar, 2014, p. 10.

29. Negri, 1991, p. 69.
30. Ibid., pp. 190–91.
31. Hardt and Negri, 2004.
32. See Negri, 1999.
33. See Laclau, 2001.
34. See E. O. Wright, 2010.
35. Dussel, 2008, pp. 14, 19, 20.
36. Ibid., p. 21.
37. Ibid., pp. 18–23.
38. Ibid., p. 69.
39. Ibid., pp. 111–12.
40. Dussel, 2013, p. 394.
41. Ibid., p. 212.
42. See Douzinas and Žižek, 2010.
43. See Ward, 1982.
44. Graeber, 2013, pp. 186, 207.
45. Ibid., p. 211.
46. Graeber, 2004, p. 89.
47. Ince, 2012.
48. Graeber, 2013, p. 196.
49. Kropotkin, 1972.
50. Graeber, 2011, p. 100.
51. Graeber, 2013, p. 294.
52. See Purcell, 2013.
53. Ward, 1982, p. 39.
54. See J. C. Scott, 2009.
55. J. C. Scott, 1998.
56. J. C. Scott, 1987.
57. See Li, 2005.
58. For example, see Bakunin, 1980, p. 332.
59. J. C. Scott, 1998, p. 183.
60. Shklar, 1998.
61. See Benhabib, 1994.
62. Shklar, 1998, p. 3.
63. Shklar, 1984.
64. Shklar, 1998, p. 11.
65. Ibid., p. 9.
66. Williams, 2005a, p. 59.
67. Shklar, 1984, pp. 15–23.
68. Dunn, 1999, pp. 329, 331.
69. Dunn, 2000, p. 30.
70. Dunn, 1999, p. 342.
71. Arendt, 1969, p. 39.
72. See Foucault, 1983; Foucault, 1997.
73. See, for example, Macpherson, 1973.

74. Hayward, 2000, p. 39.
75. Hamilton, 2014a, p. 28.
76. I. Young, 2005, p. 493.
77. J. Allen, 2003.
78. See Walzer, 1983.
79. I. Young, 2005, p. 498.
80. See Barnett, 2003.
81. Foucault, 1983, pp. 220, 221.
82. Foucault, 2014, p. 240.
83. Ibid., pp. 251–52.
84. See Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, pp. 26–27.
85. Cooke, 2006.
86. Ibid., pp. 14–15.
87. Fraser, 2003a, p. 200.
88. See Honneth, 2003a, pp. 238–47.
89. For a critique of the Eurocentrism inherent in the continued attachment to this narrative, see Harootunian, 2015.
90. See Barnett, 2011b.
91. Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, pp. xxiii–xxv.
92. Canguilhem, 1991.
93. Sellars, 1997.
94. Rouse, 2007, p. 3.
95. Brandom, 2011, p. 9.
96. See Reed and Rooney, 2015.
97. Cooke, 2006, p. 4.
98. Ogden and Richards, 1923.
99. Barthes, 1988.
100. See Hirschkop, 1999.
101. Saussure, 1959, pp. 173–76.
102. Barthes, 1988, pp. 152–53.
103. See also Agnew, 2014.
104. Wittgenstein, 1967, §43.
105. Gaita, 1990, p. xii.
106. See Dunn, 2014.
107. See Freeden, 2013.
108. Plamenatz, 1973.
109. See Norval, 2007.
110. See B. Williams, 2002.

CHAPTER 2. Criteria for Democratic Inquiry

1. See A. Allen, 2016.
2. Zerilli, 2009.
3. See Cassin, 2014a, p. 530.
4. Arendt, 2003, p. 37.
5. Arendt, 2005, pp. 103, 104.

6. Arendt, 1978a, pp. 192–93.
7. Arendt, 1958, p. 157.
8. Arendt, 1973, 10–11.
9. Arendt, 1992. See also Caygill, 1989.
10. See Arendt, 1978a, pp. 257–58. See also Arendt, 2003, pp. 140–41.
11. Arendt, 1992, p. 65.
12. Arendt, 1977, pp. 218, 237.
13. Arendt, 1978b, p. 272.
14. Arendt, 2003, p. 146.
15. Arendt, 1977, p. 217.
16. See Zerilli, 2005.
17. See Zerilli, 2002.
18. See Zerilli, 2012.
19. Zerilli, 2009, p. 315.
20. See Mohanty, 1995.
21. Zerilli, 2009, p. 315.
22. See Zerilli, 2016.
23. See Honig, 1991; Lee, 1995.
24. See Naas, 1992.
25. See Barnett, 1999b.
26. Derrida, 2005b, p. 25.
27. Derrida, 1994, p. 65.
28. Derrida, 2005a, p. 130.
29. Derrida, 1994, pp. 64–65.
30. Derrida, 2005a, p. 140
31. Gallie, 1955–56.
32. Lukes, 1974.
33. See Wartenberg, 1990, pp. 16–17.
34. Connolly, 1993b.
35. Gallie, 1955–56, pp. 68, 172.
36. Ibid., 184.
37. Margalit, 2013, p. 6.
38. Macpherson, 1966.
39. Gallie, 1955–56, p. 172.
40. Ibid., 180.
41. Wartenberg, 1990, p. 15.
42. Ibid., p. 14.
43. See Freeden, 2004.
44. See, for example, Wittgenstein, 1967, §66.
45. Ibid., §67.
46. Wittgenstein, 1974, §139.
47. See Das, 2015, p. 61.
48. See S. Rosen, 2002.
49. See Dunn, 1996.
50. See R. Williams, 1989.

51. See Taylor, 1989, pp. 211–18.
52. See Norris, 2006.
53. Cavell, 2002, p. 22.
54. See Zerilli, 2015.
55. Cavell, 1979, p. 122.
56. See Das, 2015, pp. 60–62.
57. Cavell, 2002 p. 52.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., pp. 52–56.
60. See Cavell, 1984.
61. See Cavell, 1989, pp. 41–43.
62. For example, see Cavell, 1979, pp. 80–85.
63. See Rorty, 1990.
64. See Cavell, 1989, pp. 11–12.
65. See Cavell, 1990.
66. Cavell, 2002, p. 43.
67. See Das, 2007, pp. 7–8; Barnett, 2015.
68. See Pitkin, 1972.
69. Cavell, 1979, pp. 31–32.
70. Ibid., p. 35.
71. Tully, 2008a, p. 28.
72. Slater, 2007.
73. For example, see Fung and Wright, 2003; de Sousa Santos, 2006; Wainwright, 2003.
74. See Collier and Levitsky, 1997.
75. Sartori, 1987, p. 156.
76. Ibid., pp. 182–85.
77. See Saward, 2009.
78. See Markoff, 1999.
79. Goody, 2007, pp. 9, 248.
80. Sen, 1999a; Sen, 2003.
81. Sen, 2005, p. 13.
82. Slater, 2002.
83. See Hagmann, 2006, p. 611.
84. For example, see Eley, 2002; Meckstroth, 2015.
85. Rosanvallon, 2009.
86. Dunn, 2014, p. 55.
87. Tilly, 1995, pp. 365–66.
88. Ibid., p. 366.
89. See Tilly, 2007a.
90. Saward, 2003, p. 174.
91. Ibid., p. 164 (emphasis in original).
92. Butler, 1990.
93. Butler, 1997.
94. Derrida, 1976, pp. 141–47.

95. Saward, 2003, p. 167.
96. See also Isin and Saward, 2013.
97. Paley, 2002, p. 479.
98. See also Schaffer, 2000.
99. Paley, 2004.
100. See Stokke, 2009.
101. Paley, 2002, p. 486.
102. Paley, 2008, p. 8.
103. Paley, 2002, p. 475.
104. See also J. S. Dryzek, 2016.
105. Paley, 2002, p. 478.
106. Hirschman, 1991, pp. 168, 169.
107. Hunter and Meredyth, 2000.
108. See Ortner, 1995.
109. See also Corbridge, 2007; Paller, 2013.

CHAPTER 3. The Ontological Need

1. See Norval and Howarth, 2014.
2. See Barnett, 2011c.
3. See Hauptmann, 2004.
4. See Strathausen, 2009.
5. Pettit, 2005, p. 157.
6. See Hay, 2006.
7. Quine, 1969, pp. 54–55.
8. Woolgar and Pawluch, 1985.
9. See Hacking, 2002.
10. See S. White, 2000.
11. See Marres, 2009.
12. See Braun and Whatmore, 2010; Coole and Frist, 2010.
13. See J. Bennett, 2010.
14. See Mol, 1999; see also Blaser, 2009; Pickering, 2009.
15. It should be said that this certainly *is* the sense of ontology revived in discussions of so-called object-oriented ontology. For this reason, this strand of thought has little to say about ordinary politics. See Bryant, 2011.
16. See Castoriadis, 1987.
17. See Marchart, 2007.
18. Adorno, 1973, pp. 73–74.
19. Kivinen and Piiroinen, 2004.
20. Taylor, 1989, p. 27.
21. Strawson, 1959, p. 9.
22. See Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015.
23. Crouch, 2004.
24. Brown, 2015.
25. Wolin, 2008.
26. For more nuanced interpretations of the conceptual and empirical issues at stake

in the interpretation of these phenomena, see Clarke, Jennings, Moss, and Stoker, 2016; and Saunders, 2014.

27. See Badiou, 2005b, pp. 141–52.
28. Žižek, 2006.
29. Rancière, 1999, p. 83.
30. Ibid., pp. 102, 112.
31. Žižek, 1991, pp. 193–97; see also Arditi, 2003.
32. See Lefort, 1988.
33. Pitkin, 1972, p. 209.
34. Ibid., pp. 208–9.
35. Ibid., p. 214.
36. Ibid., p. 213.
37. See Hunter, 2006.
38. See Wolin, 1969.
39. See Hauptmann, 2005.
40. See, for example, Abensour and Breaugh, 2007.
41. Hauptmann, 2005, p. 230.
42. Wolin, 2004, p. 385.
43. Ibid., p. 259.
44. Ibid., p. 425.
45. Wolin, 1996, p. 31.
46. Wolin, 1996, pp. 31, 39.
47. Wolin, 1994, p. 11.
48. Wolin, 2004, p. 604.
49. Ibid., p. 602.
50. Wolin, 2005, pp. 2, 6.
51. See Heidegger, 1962, pp. 21–64.
52. Dallmayr, 1993, p. 50.
53. Mouffe, 2002a, p. 7.
54. See Douzinas, 2013, pp. 107–18.
55. See Saar, 2012.
56. See, for example, Marchart, 2011.
57. See Zerilli, 1998.
58. See Lefort, 1986.
59. Lefort, 2000, p. 259.
60. Lefort, 1988, pp. 213–55, quote on 225.
61. Ibid., pp. 218, 219.
62. See Howard, 2011; Ingram, 2006.
63. Lefort, 1988, pp. 11–12.
64. Lefort, 2007, p. 143.
65. The theme of the disembodiment of democratic power is shared by other traditions of radical democratic thought. See Barnett, 2004.
66. Lefort, 2000, pp. 268–69.
67. See Lefort, 2007.

68. Lefort, 2000, p. 138.
69. Merleau-Ponty, 1964, pp. 214.
70. See Machiavelli, 1970.
71. Merleau-Ponty, 1964, pp. 211, 215.
72. Lefort, 2000, pp. 130, 131.
73. See Critchley, 1992.
74. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, 1997, p. 97.
75. Ibid., 126–27.
76. Ibid., pp. 105, 109.
77. J.-L. Nancy, 1991, p. xxxvii.
78. Ibid., p. 40.
79. J.-L. Nancy, 2000, p. 23.
80. See, for example, Fraser, 1989a.
81. J.-L. Nancy, 2006, p. 4.
82. J.-L. Nancy, 1991, p. xxxvi.
83. See Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, p. 110.
84. Heidegger, 1962, p. 32.
85. See Heidegger, 1977.
86. See Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990.
87. Heidegger, 1977, p. 129.
88. See Gregory, 1994.
89. Brandom, 2002, pp. 328–32.
90. Ibid., pp. 80–83.
91. Taylor, 1995, p. 12.
92. Ibid., pp. 68–69.
93. See, for example, Schear, 2013.
94. See Ricoeur, 1970, pp. 32–36.
95. Dallmayr, 1993, p. 9.
96. Habermas, 1985b, p. 392.
97. See Squires, 1999, pp. 46–52; Butler and Scott, 1992.
98. See Abbott, 2004, p. 81.
99. See Unger, 2005.
100. Unger, 1997, pp. 88, 7, 22, 23.
101. Ibid., p. 34.
102. Unger, 2007, pp. 56–57.
103. See Rosanvallon, 2006, pp. 51–52.
104. Ibid., pp. 34, 36.
105. Ibid., p. 36.
106. See Rosanvallon, 2007.
107. Rosanvallon, 2000, p. 27.
108. Rosanvallon, 2011, p. 163.
109. See Rosanvallon, 2008.
110. Rosanvallon, 2006, pp. 33–56.
111. See Rosanvallon, 2011.

112. Rosanvallon, 2008, pp. 19, 22.
113. See Hauptmann, 2004, p. 38.
114. Marchart, 2007, pp. 38–44.

CHAPTER 4. The Scandal of Consent

1. See M. Rosen, 1996.
2. See Althusser, 1971.
3. Gramsci, 1971, p. 12.
4. For the genealogy of this understanding of "the subject," see Balibar, Cassin, and de Libera, 2014.
5. Barthes, 1988, p. 152.
6. See Osborne, 2000.
7. Bobbio, 1989, p. 30.
8. See Montag, 1996.
9. See Ives, 2004; Carlucci, 2013.
10. Gramsci, 1985, p. 183.
11. Crowley, 1996, p. 43.
12. Gramsci, 1971, p. 164.
13. Ibid., p. 182.
14. Przeworski, 1985, p. 136.
15. See, for example, Hindess, 1983.
16. See Hall, 1980.
17. See Baron et al., 1981.
18. Hall, 1986, p. 15.
19. See Jessop et al., 1984.
20. See Hall, 1988, pp. 156–57.
21. Hall, 1980, p. 172.
22. Hall, 1988, pp. 6, 262.
23. Gamble, 1988, p. 223; see also Gamble, 1974, pp. 3–11.
24. See Schwarz, 2011, pp. 390–93.
25. Miliband, 1978.
26. See Jessop, Bonnett, and Bromley, 1990.
27. See Hall, 2011.
28. See Bérubé, 2009.
29. Laclau, 1977, pp. 60–61.
30. Poulantzas, 1968, p. 37.
31. Laclau, 1977, pp. 172–73.
32. Ibid., pp. 164–65.
33. Althusser, 1971, p. 172.
34. Hall and Jacques, 1989.
35. See Cutler et al., 1978, pp. 232–35.
36. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985.
37. Ibid., p. 1.
38. Mouffe, 1988.
39. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 125.

40. Ibid., p. 122.
41. Ibid., p. 125.
42. Ibid., p. 132.
43. Ibid., p. 133.
44. Laclau, 2005a.
45. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 88.
46. Ibid., 154.
47. Ibid., p. 187.
48. See Critchley, 2004.
49. Laclau, 1996, pp. 36–46.
50. Laclau, 2005b.
51. Laclau, 2006, p. 146.
52. See Marchart, 2005.
53. See, for example, Lacan, 1977.
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56. Laclau, 1990, pp. 40–43.
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58. Massey, 2005, p. 54.
59. Massey, 1999, p. 293.
60. See Rancière, 2000.
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63. Rancière, 1995a, pp. 11, 97.
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69. Rancière, 1999, p. 27.
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73. Rancière, 2001, para. 19.
74. See Rancière, 1999, pp. 28–34.
75. See ibid.
76. Rancière, 2003.
77. See H. White, 1992, p. xviii.
78. See T. Bennett, 2011.
79. See Foucault, 2007, pp. 322–26.
80. Rancière, 1999, pp. 29–30.
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88. Ibid., pp. 35, 36.
89. See Pêcheux, 1982, pp. 156–57.
90. See Foster, 2013.
91. Rancière, 2003, p. 226.
92. See Rancière, 2006b.
93. See Dikeç, 2010.
94. See, for example, Rancière, 1999, pp. 1–42.
95. Rancière, 1995a, p. 177.
96. Rancière, 1999, p. 139.
97. See Rancière, 2010a.
98. See also Robbins, 2013.
99. Balibar, 2009, p. 70.
100. See Rancière, 2004b.
101. Balibar, 2014, pp. 6, 50, 281–82, 283.
102. Balibar, 2002, p. 35.
103. See also Staeheli et al., 2012.
104. See Barnett, 1999a; Patton 2013.
105. Foucault, 2010, p. 159.
106. See Mezzadra, 2011.
107. Foucault, 2010, pp. 158, 159.
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111. See R. Young, 2001.
112. See Chatterjee, 2013.
113. Guha, 1989, pp. 41–42.
114. Chatterjee, 1986, p. 388.
115. Chatterjee, 2004, p. 69.
116. Ibid., p. 74.
117. Chatterjee, 2011, p. 198.
118. Chatterjee, 2004, pp. 37–38.
119. Chatterjee, 2011, pp. 11–15.
120. For a related argument about postcolonial governmentality and democratization, see Ferguson, 2015.
121. Chatterjee, 2004, p. 76.
122. See also Corbridge et al., 2005.
123. Chatterjee, 2011, pp. 92, 228.
124. Chatterjee, 2004, p. 69.
125. Hacking, 1986.

126. Chatterjee, 2011, p. 15.
127. Chatterjee, 2004, p. 59.
128. Ibid., p. 60.
129. See Giddens, 1983, pp. 197–214.
130. See Chatterjee, 2010.
131. Chatterjee, 2011, pp. 147–50, 207.
132. See also Honig, 2015.
133. See Jeffrey, 2010.
134. On politics as partaking, see Chabal, 2009.
135. Chatterjee, 2004, p. 64.
136. Menon, 2010, p. 16.
137. Micheluuti, 2007.
138. Chatterjee, 2004, p. 67.
139. For critical discussions of this way of thinking, see, for example, D. Scott, 1996; and Shapiro, 1999b.
140. See Berlant, 2011.
141. Tilly, 2007b.

CHAPTER 5. The Significance of Conflict

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2. See Barnett, 2008b. See also Fung, 2005; I. M. Young, 2001a.
3. See Mouffe, 2005, p. 131.
4. Connolly, 1993a, p. 170.
5. Schaap, 2007, p. 60.
6. See, for example, Laclau, 2005a, pp. 73–78.
7. Ibid., pp. 47, 48.
8. Massey, 1995, p. 287.
9. Mouffe, 1993, p. 7.
10. Mouffe, 1999.
11. Heller, 1991, p. 332.
12. See McCormick, 1997; see also Minca and Rowan, 2015.
13. Schmitt, 2005, p. 5.
14. See Barnett, 2009.
15. Marcuse, 1972, pp. 145–46.
16. Schmitt, 1996, p. 26.
17. Derrida, 1997.
18. Schmitt, 1996, pp. 22, 29.
19. Mouffe, 1993, p. 114.
20. See Girard, 1977. For a critical consideration of Girard's thought, see Moi, 1999, pp. 312–28.
21. Girard, 2013, pp. 8, 11.
22. Girard, 1977, p. 98.
23. See Saint-Amand, 1996.
24. Mouffe, 2000, pp. 136, 131.
25. Lacan, 1977, p. 171.

26. Mouffe, 1993, p. 141.
27. Staten, 1994, pp. 15–18.
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29. Mouffe, 2000, p. 101.
30. Mouffe, 2005, pp. 73, 16.
31. Mouffe, 2000, p. 13.
32. Mouffe, 2005, p. 20.
33. Mouffe, 2000, p. 103.
34. Mouffe, 2002a, p. 7.
35. Mouffe, 2000, pp. 38, 103.
36. Mouffe, 2005, p. 17.
37. Mouffe, 2002a, p. 8.
38. Ibid., p. 94.
39. See Mouffe, 2013; see also Massey, 2013, 12–22.
40. See Weber, 1994, pp. 309–69.
41. See Derrida, 1997, pp. 214–15.
42. Mouffe, 2005, p. 114.
43. See Brown and Gilman, 1960.
44. Tanseni, 2001, p. 14.
45. See Barnett, 2008a; see also Iveson, 2007.
46. See Dikeç, Clark, and Barnett, 2009.
47. Pitkin, 1972, p. 208.
48. See Saward, 2010.
49. See Cavell, 1979, pp. 18–28; Cavell, 2002, pp. 67–68.
50. I. Young, 1997, p. 64.
51. See Cavell, 1990, pp. 101–26.
52. See Cavell, 2005.
53. See also Cordero, 2014.
54. Isin, 2002, p. 17; see also Abizadeh, 2005.
55. Williams, 2005b.
56. Williams, 2006, pp. 162, 164.
57. Habermas, 1990, p. 58.
58. Habermas, 1984, pp. 283–86, quote on p. 286.
59. Dubiel, 1992.
60. Honneth, 1991, pp. 156, 157, 167. See also Hacking, 2004, pp. 277–302.
61. McCarthy, 1991, p. 65.
62. See Patton, 2014.
63. Dietz, 2002, pp. 141–608.
64. Machiavelli, 2009, p. 38.
65. Machiavelli, 1970, p. 116.
66. See McCormick, 2001; Abensour, 2010.
67. Dietz, 2002, pp. 150, 151 (italics in original).
68. Ibid., p. 151.
69. See, for example, Duverger, 1972.
70. See Knight and Johnson, 2011.

71. Przeworski, 2011, p. 168, 176.
72. See Przeworski, 1999.
73. Przeworski, 2010.
74. See Elster, 2000; Elster, 2007, pp. 403–23.
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80. Simmel, 1903.
81. Dubiel, 1998, p. 210.
82. See Krause, 2008.
83. Dubiel, 1998, pp. 215, 217.
84. See Gauchet and Swain, 1999, pp. 84–92; see also Moyn, 2005.
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87. See also Mann, 2004.
88. Hirschman, 1994, p. 214.
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92. Unger, 1998, p. 26.
93. See Unger, 2005, pp. 37–39.
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95. Piven and Cloward, 1979.
96. Piven, 2006, p. 21.
97. See Schatzchi, 2011.

CHAPTER 6. Claims of the Affected

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4. Walzer, 1983, p. 292 (italics in the original).
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8. See Braun and Disch, 2002.
9. Tully, 2008b, p. 77.
10. See Latour, 2003.
11. See, for example, Barry and Pogge, 2005; Brock, 2009; Kuper, 2005; O. O'Neill, 2000.
12. See Blake, 2012; Blake and Chambers, 2003.
13. Beck, 1999.
14. Maus, 2006.
15. Held, 1995, pp. 18, 153.
16. On the shadow theory of modern democracy, see Dahl, 1989, pp. 3–5.

17. Rawls, 1999b, pp. 115–19.
18. Pogge, 2001.
19. See Brock, 2013.
20. Benhabib, 2004, pp. 110–14.
21. Fraser, 2008, p. 41.
22. See Shapiro, 1999a; I. M. Young, 2000.
23. See also Jaggar, 1993.
24. See Mulhall and Swift, 1992.
25. Cohen, 1999, pp. 247, 248, 264.
26. See Scheuerman, 2006.
27. See Cohen and Fung, 2004.
28. See Habermas, 2001b.
29. Habermas, 1998, p. 124.
30. Scheuerman, 2008; see also Sassen, 2007.
31. Habermas, 2001b, p. 53.
32. See Abizadeh, 2012.
33. See Habermas, 2015.
34. See Habermas, 1996, pp. 118–31.
35. See Habermas, 1998, pp. 129–53.
36. Ibid., pp. 114–17.
37. Habermas, 2001b, p. 56.
38. Ibid., pp. 109, 110–11; see also Manin, 1987, pp. 351–52; Offe, 2011.
39. See Habermas, 1996, pp. 463–90.
40. See Näsström, 2011.
41. Fung, 2013, p. 246.
42. Shapiro, 1999a, p. 37.
43. Shapiro, 2003, p. 219.
44. Shapiro, 1999a, p. 38.
45. Ibid., pp. 234–38; see Barnett and Scott, 2007.
46. Shapiro, 2003, p. 220.
47. Shapiro, 1999a, p. 38.
48. Ibid., p. 235.
49. Shapiro, 2003, p. 222.
50. Shapiro, 1999a, p. 235.
51. Ibid., p. 37.
52. R. E. Goodin, 2003, p. 211.
53. Gould, 2004, pp. 175–78.
54. See Gould, 2014, pp. 81–91.
55. Saward, 1998, pp. 125–26.
56. Eckersley, 2006, p. 107.
57. See I. M. Young, 2011.
58. Dewey, 1927.
59. Dewey, 1980, p. 92.
60. See Barnett and Bridge, 2013.
61. Dewey, 1927, p. 39.

62. Ibid., p. 16.
63. Ibid., p. 35.
64. See Barnett, 2014b.
65. See Habermas, 1996, pp. 354–59.
66. See Eckersley, 2004, chapter 7.
67. See Geuss, 1981, pp. 45–54.
68. Habermas, 1971.
69. Habermas, 1993, p. 50.
70. Habermas, 2008, pp. 81, 82–83.
71. See Cooke, 1993.
72. Habermas, 2001b, pp. 150–51.
73. Habermas, 2001a; see also Honig, 2001.
74. Rawls, 1971, pp. 17–22.
75. Habermas, 1990, pp. 66, 68.
76. Habermas, 1996, p. 127.
77. Habermas, 1990, p. 65.
78. See Mead, 1932, pp. 83–85.
79. Habermas, 2006, p. 35.
80. Habermas, 1993, p. 49.
81. Habermas, 2002a, p. 308.
82. Habermas, 2006, p. 103.
83. Habermas, 1996, p. 107.
84. Ibid., pp. 108–9.
85. Habermas, 1990, pp. 66, 67–68.
86. Habermas, 1996, p. 107.
87. Habermas, 2006, p. 185.
88. Habermas, 1998, pp. 108–11.
89. See J. Parkinson, 2006.
90. Ibid., p. 153.
91. Benhabib, 1992, pp. 6, 153, 9.
92. Benhabib, 2004, p. 218.
93. Benhabib, 1992, p. 145.
94. See Langsdorf, 1997.
95. Fraser, 1997a.
96. Benhabib, 1992, pp. 53–54.
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98. Benhabib, 1992, p. 8.
99. Benhabib, 1992, pp. 158–59, 169.
100. See O. O'Neill, 1996.
101. Gatta, 2014.
102. Benhabib, 1992, pp. 170, 185.
103. See Castree, 2014.
104. R. Goodin, 2007, p. 63.
105. R. Goodin, 2003, pp. 5, 7, 224–25.
106. R. Goodin, 1996.

107. R. Goodin, 2003, p. 219.
108. Eckersley, 2000, p. 118.
109. Ibid., p. 119.
110. See Marres, 2007; Marres, 2012, pp. 28–59.
111. See Latour, 2007.
112. See also Mol, 2012.
113. See Latour, 2004a; see also Stengers, 2008.
114. See Barnett, 2014c.
115. See Latour, 2004b.
116. See also Jasanoff, 2006.
117. See J. Bennett, 2010.
118. See Latour, 2013.
119. Latour, 2004b, pp. 102–15.
120. Ibid., p. 248.
121. See also Schlosberg, 2013.
122. J. S. Dryzek, 2000, p. 29.
123. J. S. Dryzek, 1996, pp. 4–6.
124. J. S. Dryzek, 2006a, pp. 84–85, 155.
125. Dryzek and Niemeyer, 2008.
126. J. S. Dryzek, 2001.
127. Dryzek and Niemeyer, 2008, p. 491.
128. Ibid., pp. 484–85.
129. J. S. Dryzek, 2012.
130. See, for example, Amin, Massey, and Thrift, 2005.
131. Saward, 2010, p. 42.
132. Habermas, 1996, pp. 354–59.
133. See, for example, E. Anderson, 2006; Fung, 2012.
134. Habermas, 1992.
135. Habermas, 1984, p. xxiv.
136. Benhabib, 2006, pp. 32–36.
137. Benhabib, 2004, p. 220–21.
138. Benhabib, 2004, p. 113.
139. Calhoun, 2007, p. 24.
140. Calhoun, 2002.
141. Calhoun, 2007, p. 154.

CHAPTER 7. Subjects of Domination

1. Pettit, 2008.
2. See Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979.
3. See Dubiel, 1985, pp. 90–92.
4. Walzer, 1983.
5. See Levitt, 2010; Shapiro, 2012.
6. Dahl, 1989, pp. 119–31.
7. Dahl, 1970, p. 46.
8. See Dahl, 1971.

9. Dahl, 1989, p. 120.
10. Ibid., p. 3.
11. Dahl, 1970, p. 59.
12. Dahl, 1970, pp. 64, 65, 66, 59.
13. Ibid., p. 66.
14. See Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006, pp. 66–67.
15. See Barnett, 2013.
16. Fraser, 1989b.
17. Fraser, 2003b, pp. 67–69.
18. Fraser, 2013, p. 13.
19. See Pogge, 2002.
20. Fraser, 2008, p. 21.
21. Ibid., pp. 50–51.
22. Ibid., p. 77.
23. Fraser, 2008, pp. 95, 25, 96.
24. Ibid., p. 164 (emphasis in the original).
25. Fraser, 2003b, p. 42.
26. Ibid., pp. 43, 71.
27. Fraser, 2008, p. 57.
28. Bohman, 2007b, p. 43.
29. Fraser, 2008, p. 25.
30. Ibid., p. 167.
31. See ibid., pp. 48–75.
32. Fraser, 2008, pp. 64, 65.
33. Fraser, 2014.
34. Ibid., p. 154.
35. Shklar, 1990, pp. 35, 39.
36. I. Young, 1990a, p. 31.
37. Ibid., pp. 37, 102–7, 121.
38. See Rawls, 1999a.
39. Young, 2006.
40. Jaggar, 2009, pp. 97, 98.
41. I. Young, 2011, pp. 45–47.
42. See Rawls, 1971, pp. 14–15.
43. Katznelson, 1996, p. 81.
44. See Sen, 2015, pp. 118–21.
45. I. Young, 2001b.
46. See Hurley, 2003.
47. E. Anderson, 2010.
48. See I. Young, 2002.
49. Young, 2011, pp. 70–71, 52.
50. Ibid., p. 75.
51. Forst, 2007, p. 260.
52. Forst, 2011, p. 4.
53. Walzer, 1983, p. 15.

54. Forst, 2007, p. 260.
55. I. Young, 2011, p. 105.
56. See Barnett, Robinson, and Rose, 2008; Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, and Malpass, 2011.
57. I. Young, 2007, pp. 159–87.
58. I. Young, 2011, p. 124.
59. I. Young, 2007, pp. 181–86.
60. See Massey, 2004.
61. I. Young, 2007, p. 179.
62. See Pettit, 2001.
63. See Berlin, 1975; see also Skinner, 2002.
64. Pettit, 1997, pp. 21–22.
65. I. Young, 2007, pp. 46, 149.
66. See Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2000.
67. I. Young, 2007, p. 48.
68. Hamilton, 2014a, p. 21.
69. I. Young, 2007, p. 48.
70. Pettit, 1999, pp. 183–85.
71. Pettit, 2012b, p. 23.
72. For a consideration of the "real-world" application of Pettit's philosophy, see Martí and Pettit, 2010.
73. Pettit, 1997, pp. 200, 184.
74. Ibid., pp. 185, 200.
75. Pettit, 2012b, p. 123.
76. Pettit, 2014.
77. For the argument that Pettit's account of republicanism and democracy is not contestatory *enough* and that his notion of non-domination remains too passive when compared to a stronger notion of freedom *as* power, see McCormick, 2011, pp. 141–69; Hamilton, 2014b, pp. 52–64.
78. See Pettit, 2012a.
79. Bohman, 2012.
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82. Bohman, 2007, pp. 3–4.
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89. See Bohman, 2005.
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94. Ibid., p. 26.
95. See Warren, 2010.
96. Warren, 2010, p. 51.
97. Fung, 2013, p. 264.

CHAPTER 8. The Sense of Injustice

1. Wolgast, 1987, p. 128.
2. J. Bernstein, 2005.
3. See Solomon, 1990, pp. 242–96.
4. Critchley, 2007, p. 105.
5. Ibid., pp. 24–25.
6. See Critchley, 2012, pp. 28–35.
7. Critchley, 2007, p. 130.
8. Solomon, 1990, p. 245.
9. Hume, 1999, pp. 161–62.
10. See Zerilli, 2015.
11. See Merrifield and Swyngedouw, 1995; MacLeod and McFarlane, 2014.
12. Dorling, 2011.
13. See Fincher and Iveson, 2012.
14. See M. Wright, 2010.
15. Cahn, 1949.
16. See Pitkin, 1972, pp. 169–92.
17. Shklar, 1990, pp. 15, 17.
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19. Ibid., p. 103.
20. See Shklar, 1984, pp. 7–44.
21. Shklar, 1990, p. 85.
22. Diamond, 2001.
23. See Diamond, 2008.
24. Diamond, 2001, pp. 120–21.
25. See Cavell, 2002, pp. 238–66; Cavell, 1990, pp. 101–28.
26. Forst, 2011, p. 4.
27. See also Arendt, 2005, pp. 93–200.
28. See J. O'Neill, 2002.
29. Fraser, 1997a, p. 173.
30. See Krause, 2008.
31. Hampshire, 2000, pp. pp. 67–68, quotes on pp. 8, 80.
32. See Smith, 1994; Fainstein, 2011.
33. See Soja, 2010.
34. See Smith, 2000.
35. Wolgast, 1987, pp. 137, 145.
36. See also Gaus, 2016.
37. See Corbridge, 2002.
38. Sen, 2002, pp. 2–4, 19–21.

39. Ibid., pp. 86, 87, xi.
40. Sen, 2006.
41. Sen, 2010b, p. 299.
42. See Gotoh and Dumouchel, 2010.
43. Sen, 2010b, p. 299.
44. Sen, 1999b, pp. 287, 190.
45. Sen, 2009, p. ix.
46. Ibid., p. 96.
47. Ibid., pp. 15, 100.
48. Ibid., p. 299.
49. See Sen, 2010a.
50. See Sen, 1977.
51. Beerbohm, 2014, pp. 340, 341, 342.
52. Sen, 2009, pp. 167–69, 389, 390, 329–32.
53. See Markell, 2006.
54. Taylor, 1994, p. 32.
55. See Barnett, 2008b.
56. Honneth, 2003a, pp. 243, 244, 245.
57. Ibid., p. 114.
58. Honneth, 2009, pp. 19–42.
59. Honneth, 1999, p. 325.
60. Honneth, 2011.
61. See Finlayson, 2009.
62. Honneth, 2007, p. 70.
63. See Honneth, 2010.
64. See Honneth, 1995.
65. Honneth, 2007, p. 74.
66. See also Sayer, 2005.
67. Honneth, 1999, p. 330.
68. Honneth, 2007, p. 72.
69. Honneth, 2003b, p. 134.
70. See A. Allen, 2010.
71. Honneth, 2003b, p. 124.
72. Honneth, 2014, p. 9.
73. Honneth, 2007, p. 64.
74. Honneth, 2003a, p. 247.
75. Honneth, 2007, p. 71.
76. See Moore, 1978.
77. Honneth, 2007, p. 84.
78. Ibid., p. 72.
79. Honneth, 1995, p. 131.
80. Ibid., p. 138.
81. Honneth, 2003b, p. 120.
82. Honneth, 1995, pp. 138–39, 143.
83. Moore, 1978, pp. 46–47.

84. Moore's discussion of the sources of a felt sense of injustice belongs to a broader tradition of historical analysis of the not quite political folk expectations of accountability, material provisioning, and obligation that have shaped popular expressions of discontent. See Thompson, 1971. For an updated consideration of the concept of moral economy, with a less populist slant, see Sayer, 2007.

85. Moore, 1978, p. 77.

86. Ibid., pp. 474, 351–52, 476.

87. Ibid., pp. 6, 77–80.

88. Fricker, 2007, pp. 1, 5.

89. See Habermas, 1970; see also Crossley, 2004.

90. Honneth, 2009, p. 29.

91. Honneth, 2007, p. 78.

92. See Boltanski, 2011.

93. Forst, 2014, p. 110.

94. See Honneth, 2008.

95. See McNay, 2008.

96. See I. Young, 1994.

97. See Oliver, 2001.

98. Markell, 2003, pp. 177–89.

99. See Fraser and Honneth, 2003.

100. Fraser, 2003a, p. 203.

101. Fraser, 2003b, p. 11.

102. Fraser, 1997b, p. 15.

103. Fraser, 2000, p. 110.

104. Fraser, 2013, pp. 168–69, quote on 164.

105. Fraser, 2011, p. 73.

106. Fraser, 2003b, p. 45.

107. Tully, 2000, pp. 469, 471, 477.

108. Forst, 2014, p. 5.

109. See Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006.

110. See Forst, 2001.

111. Forst, 2014, p. 103.

112. See McDowell, 1994.

113. Forst, 2014, p. 2.

114. Forst, 2001, pp. 168, 169.

115. Forst, 2014, pp. 2, 97, 96; see also Habermas, 2010.

116. Forst, 2011, p. 2.

117. Harvey, 2009, p. 94.

118. I. Young, 1990a, pp. 39–65.

119. Wolgast, 1987, pp. 194–213.

120. Young, 1998, p. 40.

121. See Dewey, 1986.

122. Dussel, 2013, pp. 212–14, 342–54, 293–303.

123. Harvey, 1973, p. 98. Harvey himself deferred the challenge by disavowing "liberal formulations" of matters of justice. See Katznelson, 1995.

CONCLUSION. Profane Democratization

1. Geuss, 2008, pp. 23, 25.
2. See Pugh, 2017.
3. Cavell, 1984, p. 48.
4. On scholasticism in social theory, see Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 127–40.
5. See Barnett and Bridge, 2016.
6. Yeatman, 2010.
7. See Featherstone, 2008, pp. 682–99; Wills, 2016.
8. See also Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto, 2008.
9. See Barnett, 2014c.
10. See Lasswell, 1936. Suitably adjusted to add the spatial reference, this is also how David Smith once defined the vocation of human geography. See Smith, 1977, p. 7.
11. Habermas, 2002b, p. 113.

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